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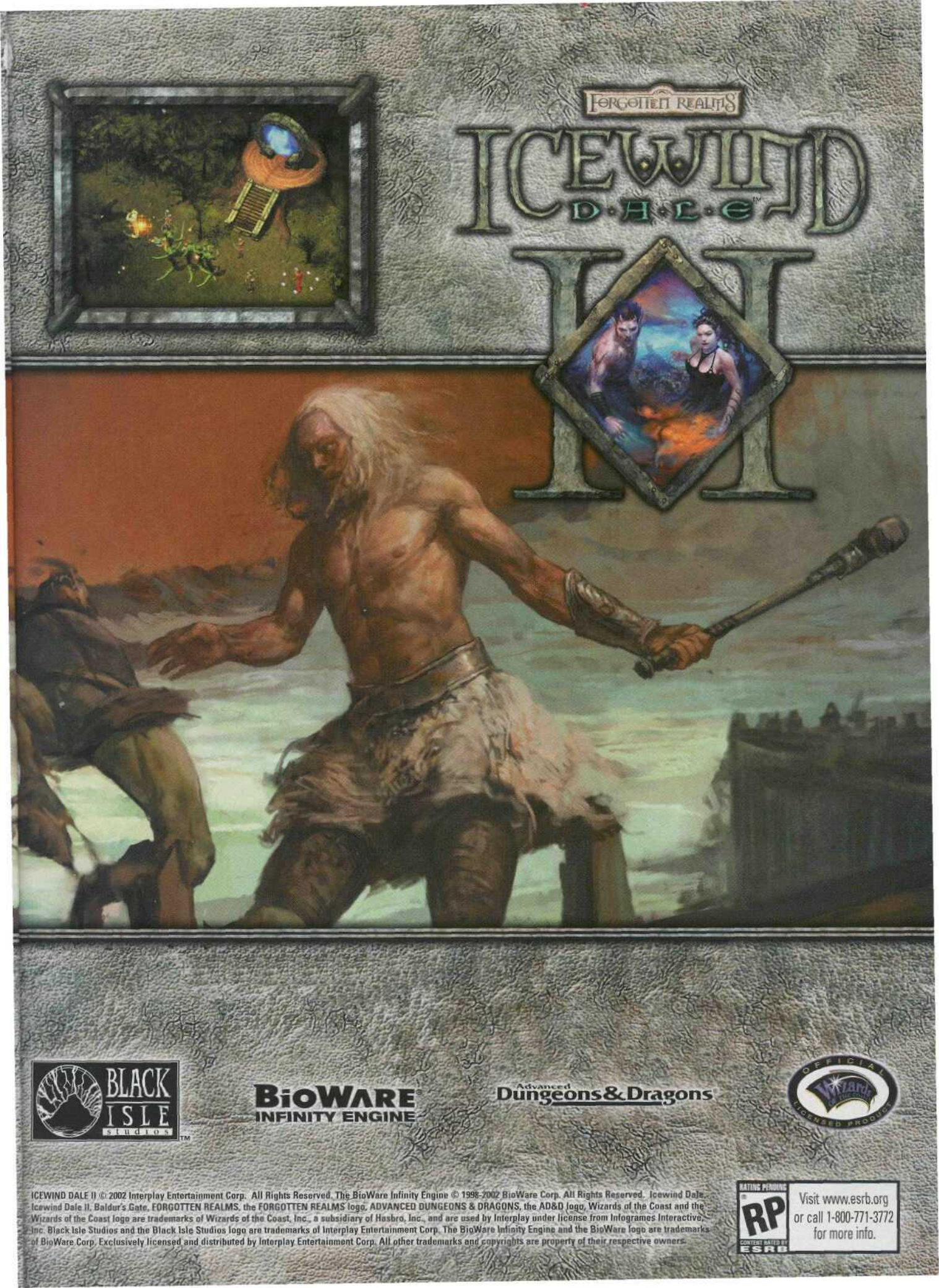

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ON THE COVER

DRAGON's 26th anniversary cover is Sam Wood's first. One of the creators of the look of the new edition, Sam now helps with concept art for D&D CHAINMAIL and illustrations for other D&D products.

26 Years of Contributions

Dragon turns 26 this month. Twenty-six years for a gaming publication; that's got to be some kind of record. Throughout those 26 years, *Dragon* has been, and continues to be, a magazine driven by its readership. Unlike many other magazines, *Dragon* (and its companion magazines, *Dungeon* and *Polyhedron*) is a product created by the ideas of its readership, and really, there are few forums that provide clearer ways to participate in the gaming industry.

It's a great time to be involved in gaming, and lots of enthusiasts are finding that there are more opportunities than ever to get their work published. *Dragon's* current anniversary makes a great excuse to remind our readership of the opportunities they have to participate in the magazine and the rest of the gaming industry. If that reminder, and the advice that follows, makes my job a little easier, that'd be okay too.

Getting published takes effort. As anyone who has written a complete article can tell you, the process takes time and effort. The new edition's emphasis on game balance and sensible mechanics means that you'll have to study existing material carefully while you're working.

Start small. Starting a project takes almost no effort at all, but finishing can be a tremendous burden if you take on more than you're ready for. Start with short articles first. In *Dragon*, that usually means an article between 1,600 and 2,000 words in length. As you get more comfortable with your writing style and build a working relationship with a company or publication, bigger projects will follow.

Be professional. Follow the writer's guidelines, be patient and courteous in your correspondence, and don't let yourself get harried by the sometimes slow publishing process.

Learn. Each time you submit a piece, whether it's published or not, you should discover something about your own writing, the publishing industry, or the game itself, and many times, you'll learn something about all three.

Know the peculiarities of the publisher. Every publisher has some preferences that range from logical to unusual to outright silly. In *Dragon's* case, the peculiarity that surprises the most contributors (and the one most often ignored by would-be contributors) is that we require manuscripts to be sent in hard copy along with a disclosure form. We don't like killing trees any more than you do, but we need a signed disclosure form to look at your manuscript. It's too hard to match a paper form with an electronic submission, so we require that the two be sent together. Other publishers have different rules, but they're usually spelled out clearly in the writer's guidelines.

Dragon is a great place to get started, but there are also plenty of other d20 companies and magazines looking for contributors. They can be found by searching for the company by name or by checking out the various d20 newssites. At Wizards of the Coast, each magazine's email address is the same as the magazine's name, so the addresses are:

Dragon Magazine: **dragon@wizards.com**
Dungeon Magazine: **dungeon@wizards.com**
Polyhedron Magazine: **polyhedron@wizards.com**

There's an updated version of the *Dragon* writer's guidelines available. Check them out at **www.wizards.com/dragon**.

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Dragon Magazine

Dragon

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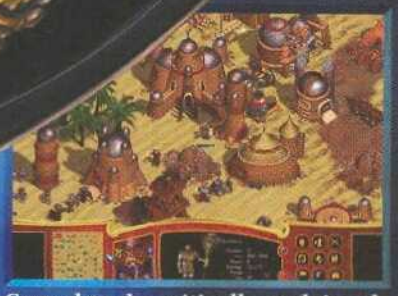

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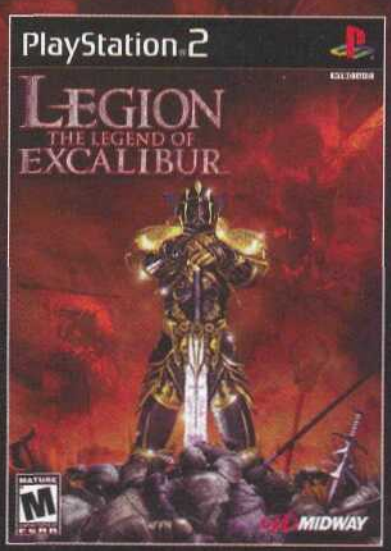

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PlayStation 2

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Blood
Violence

Scale Mail

This month, DRAGON introduces a brand new column. "Guild Secrets," written by Andy Collins, is a bi-monthly column that describes a society or guild that's ready to be included in your game. To make the guilds and societies more immediately useful to both players and DMs, each installment will include game elements that exemplify the guild's purpose. Prestige classes, spells, feats, and signature equipment are only a few of the tools that you'll see used to make members of a guild distinct.

On an unrelated note, the most common follow-up to last month's editorial is, "what kinds of articles are you looking for?" While DRAGON's editorial philosophy has always been that it's better for the author to drive the idea, we can say that we're a bit overwhelmed with prestige classes, but new spell submissions are a little light.

Lastly, don't forget to share your opinions on the message boards!

OPINIONS

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Fooled Ya!

I went to my local game store and saw the new April issue (#294) of *DRAGON Magazine* on the stand. I sighed and asked the guy behind the counter if it was worth looking at. He told me he hadn't checked it out yet, so I picked it up and looked at the cover. "CHARIOTS, WARSHIPS, FLYING MACHINES," it read. A glimmer of hope dawned. "Official DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Vehicle Rules," it further stated. I blinked in amazement. Might it be that there was actually useful content in this April humor-themed issue? "23 Holy Relics, 4 GREYHAWK Gods," the coverlines continued. I couldn't believe this was for real. It had to be a joke. But then I read the small coverlines at the bottom. "Be Funny: Funny Feats, Hilarious Equipment." "Be Funnier: Clever Catchphrases, Vicious Insults." I couldn't believe that I was going to buy an April issue of your magazine, but it really looked like there was actually some good content in it.

What an understatement! Not only was "Ramming Speed," the vehicle combat rules section, a much-needed addition that will fit into my campaign nicely, but even some of the supposedly "funny" stuff is useful!

The equipment and the reputation rules might have been printed in jest, but they actually fit in the right kind of game! Not only that, the truly silly stuff, the stuff that wouldn't be useful under any but the most contrived circumstances, only took up one page.

I am very impressed—stunned for 3d6 rounds. Finally you have made an April issue that not only isn't a waste of paper, it's a valuable addition to my game! I think you'll be hard-pressed to find one person who dislikes this change in the theme of an April issue.

Fred Wolke
Manassas, VA

Thanks for the kind words. April is in many ways the hardest month for us to prepare. For every reader who wants less humor material, there is another who wants more, and yet despite comments from both sides, it's usually one of our best-selling issues every year.

Male-icious

Well, well, well! I went into my local gaming store and was wandering around when I overheard a group of male gamers saying, "What the hell is this? I can't buy this!"

Lo and behold, *DRAGON Magazine* finally put some beefcake on the cover (another amazing piece of art by Therese Nielsen)!

Yes, after years (and years, and years) of sorceresses in thongs and amazons in chainmail brassieres, for once guys get to see what it feels like for us female gamers.

On to the rest of the issue. The "Beings of Power—Four GREYHAWK Gods" article was fantastic. As were "Faiths of Faerûn" and "Bazaar of the Bizarre: Relics of the Faith." Priests are often overlooked as the "band-aid kit" of the party, and it's nice to see a little more development there. "Ramming Speed" was also really nice to see. It's always one of those rules issues that comes up in a game that nobody quite knows how to handle. Finally, the catchphrases article, "Words to Live By," rocked! I'm definitely going to be using these sayings in my games!

Thanks for putting out a great product!

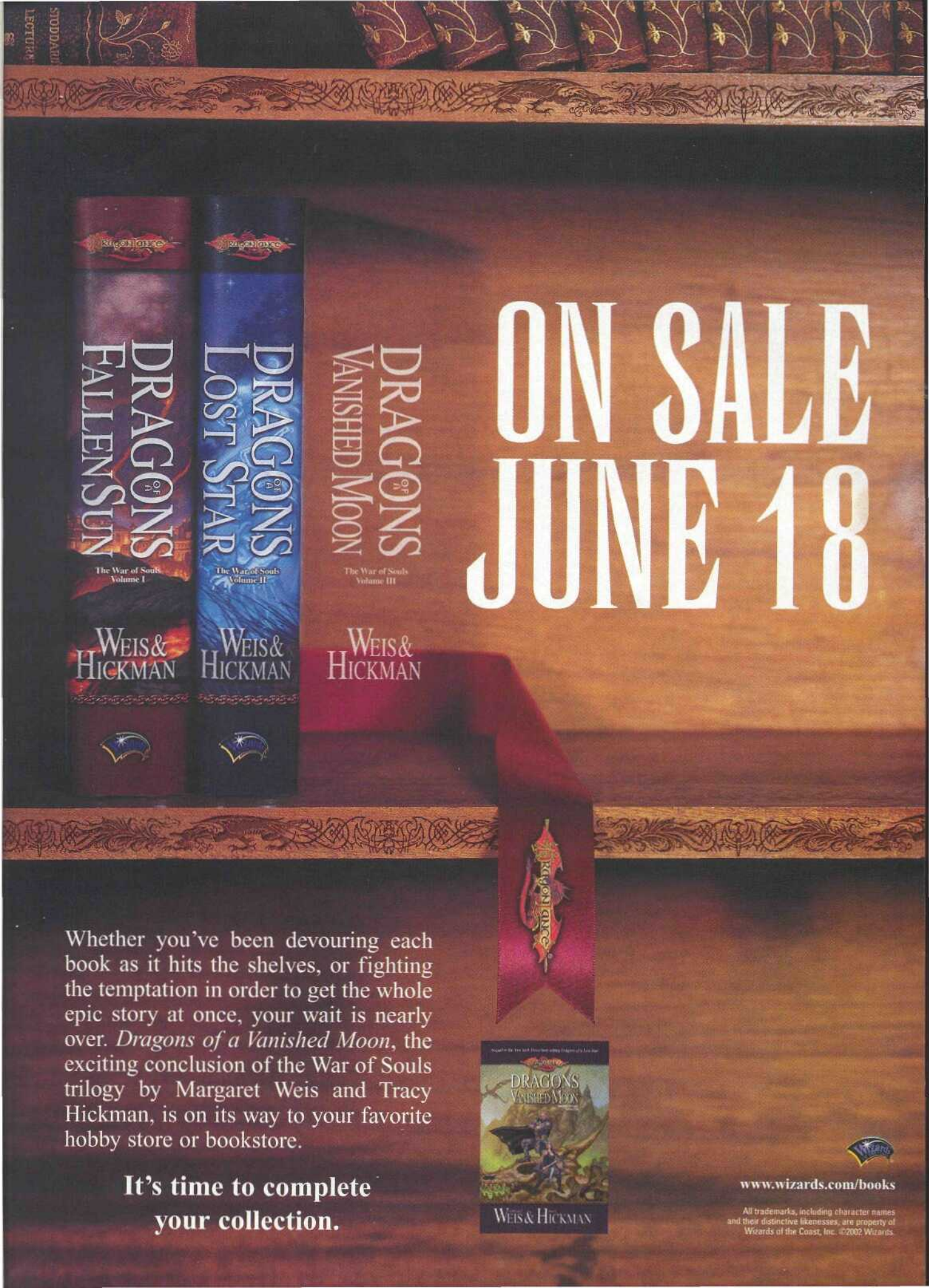
Kirstie J. Pickins
Ann Arbor, MI

Where are the Wenches?

You deserve the accolade of knighthood (in the Order of the d20) for your efforts in providing usable and entertaining game material. Don't listen to Vince Lethal ("Scale Mail," #294) and his ilk; it's a great thing to reprint the updates of "old" monsters and material for those of us who would rather use our very limited time creating our game worlds as opposed to trying to convert 2nd Edition stats into 3rd Edition ones. It saves us DMs a lot of work and headaches when we want to bring our old favorites (like the needleman) into a new game.

Most of the articles in your magazine are great. Prestige classes are especially useful, and finding two of them in issue #294 was a real boon.

Now that I've patted your backs, it's time to vary my actions a little with an admonitory kick in the shin. The art is always an issue with me. Larry Elmore and Tony DiTerlizzi are sadly missed from the pages, and although Scott Roller does superb work technically, I wish you'd do a reverse on the overall style and go back to the classic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Whether you've been devouring each book as it hits the shelves, or fighting the temptation in order to get the whole epic story at once, your wait is nearly over. *Dragons of a Vanished Moon*, the exciting conclusion of the War of Souls trilogy by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman, is on its way to your favorite hobby store or bookstore.
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medieval look. Although the cover art on issue #294 is excellent from a technical viewpoint, showing Ms. Nielsen's great skill and panache, it's a subject that frankly makes me a bit queasy. If you're going to show someone in very little clothing on the cover, please make it a lady, in deference to the 98 percent male readership of your magazine. Believe me, we don't want to see some other fellow shirtless, no matter how well the painting is rendered. I'm not suggesting that you show only scantily clad wenches on the cover, enjoying as I do pictures of mighty dragons, noble knights, crafty wizards, and so forth, but if there is going to be skin shown, please make it female skin!

Rhian Hunt
Port Wing, WI

Of course I'm joking when I say this, but you'd think we'd just stop putting bare skin of any kind on the cover: Male or female, somebody always complains. Okay, winter scenes on every issue!

Gender Bender

I'd like to thank Cory Herndon for the hilarious article that included stats of gamers' girlfriends (*Dragon* #294), but what about us girl gamers with non-gaming boyfriends?

I'm a pretty dedicated gamer girl, and one of the guys I hang out with is a non-gamer. (He seems to be contemplating becoming the non-gaming significant other.) I convinced him to try out my online RPG, which uses D&D rules. (Well, cannibalized rules, but rules nonetheless.) He just can't seem to grasp it! It's rather entertaining to watch his incompetence and the struggle he has with the rules. He's a great roleplayer, but the technical stuff really kills him. It makes me wonder if it's not a gender barrier after all. . . .

In any case, I got a kick out of the article and so did my entire group of friends, not just the gamers. I think we can all relate to some extent.

Catherine Ann Huron
delphineoo100@hotmail.com

The Other Half

To provide some balance to the "Gamer Vs. Girlfriend" article, I have written stats for a significant other on the other end of the spectrum.

Other, Significant [Male]
Medium-Sized Insider
Hit Dice: Half of what he claims to his friends
Initiative: -6 (-2 Dex, -4 beer gut)
Speed: 10 miles per hour (or more) over the speed limit
AC: 9 (-2 Dex, +1 leather trench)
Attacks: Forehead slam +3 melee (+7 drunk), beer can +1 ranged
Damage: Enough to bruise or break miniatures
Face/Reach: Television/distance to remote
Special Attacks: Lose dice, bad breath, finish then roll over, sports
Special Qualities: Immune to creativity
Saves: "Holy" socks and underwear, ex's addresses
Abilities: Varies, tells friends Dex and Con 20+
Skills: Bluff ("I'll be home for dinner") +10, Diplomacy -10, Intuit Direction ("No, I don't need to ask for directions or a map!") -50, Use Magic Device (remote) +5
Feats: Dodge (verbal assault), Run (from chores)
Climate: 10 degrees colder than the opposite sex
Organization: Solitary or pack (drinking buddies 2-8)
Challenge Rating: Female's level +3
Alignment: 10 degrees above dead center
Treasure: Paycheck, mint condition 1969 Mustang Convertible

Samantha Davis
Address withheld

In Stereo

First, I'd like to say that I've been very pleased with *Dragon* overall. However, after reading the "Gamer Vs. Girlfriend" article, I couldn't help but respond. Certainly, the article in general was more than slightly derogatory toward females and might put off those who are attempting to enjoy or join the hobby. The article reinforces stereotypes, which can detract from how people perceive the gaming hobby. I would also be really disappointed if the author of the latter half happens to be married to T'Ed Stark at Wizards of the Coast.

My only hope is that it was in jest (after all, it was the April issue), and that in the future, the editor will take a more careful look at the impact articles have on the readers, their spouses, and friends who happen to be female.

Shaun Horner
Address withheld

CAPTION CONTEST

What's so funny? Why, you are! So send your caption for this cartoon to **Caption/Dragon Magazine, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057** by July 1st, and be sure to write "issue #296" somewhere on your entry. Your caption will undergo rigorous testing by the editors, and if it passes, it just might be printed in an upcoming issue. There's no need to cut up your magazine. If you want to include the drawing, send in a photocopy.

WARHAMMER SKIRMISH

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Above - A Chaos Warrior is struck down by a bolt of energy from an unholy Monolith.

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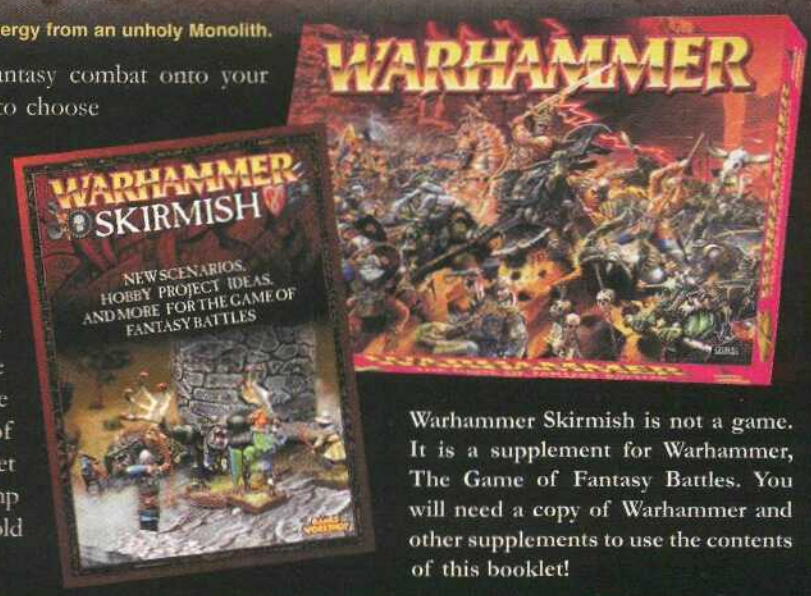

Warhammer Skirmish is not a game. It is a supplement for Warhammer, The Game of Fantasy Battles. You will need a copy of Warhammer and other supplements to use the contents of this booklet!

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Nodwick
by Aaron Williams
I THINK WE'RE LOST.
NOT WHILE I'VE GOT MY TRUSTY MAP OF GLOBAL POSITIONING!
HMM... IT APPEARS WE'VE STUMBLED INTO A PLACE MARKED WITH LOADS OF SKULLS AND CROSSBONES. RIGHT IN THE CENTER OF THIS LOCALE IT READS: "HERE THERE BE DRAGONS."
WHICH IS NO SURPRISE, SEEING THAT WE SET OUT TO HUNT THEM...
OH, YEAH...
THAT'S A RELIEF! FOR A SECOND THERE I THOUGHT WE WERE IN TROUBLE...

It was certainly in jest. All of the female staff members laughed at the article, and we saw the play on stereotypes as part of the article's appeal.

Ah, the Injustice!

I really enjoyed the "Howls of Nature's Wrath" article in *Dragon* #293. I've always liked the idea of a character having a wolf as a familiar, but broadening the "types" of wolves is great. It gives more depth and scope for a wolf-based campaign.

Although I love the new wolf types, I was disappointed that all of them were either chaotic or neutral evil, and that none of them were of good alignment. I know that there is the westernized myth of equating wolves with evil, but couldn't we move on from that a little? What about a lawful good wolf, or at the very least a true neutral one? I understand that the credo of the new edition of D&D is: "If you don't agree with it, make up your own rules, monsters, feats, and so on." But since the other credo of the new edition is "balance," it seems fitting to make this suggestion and defend these noble beings.

On another subject, I always look forward to receiving *Dragon Magazine*. I like the ideas it presents and how it sparks my imagination. The artwork is fantastic, and I especially like the "Elminster's Guide to the Realms." On the subject of the Realms, in the novels, Lolth is sometime referred to as Lloth. Did this start with a misprint somewhere and then carry on, or is the Queen of the Demonweb Pits referred to as either? Does she not get a bit touchy if people spell her name wrong?

Keep up the great work you do on *Dragon* and *Dungeon Magazines*.

Joe Cheal
Letchworth, Herts, UK

One of Dragon's recent goals has been to show gamers how the game (especially the material presented in the magazine) can be changed to fit their tastes. The wolves can be good—just change their alignments!

Lolth is chaotic, what more can we say?

I Dream of Gaming

First, let me say that the open gaming license and 3rd Edition D&D are like a gamer's dream come true. Thanks Wizards of the Coast for all the common sense, balance, and alternatives you've pumped back into the game.

The dungeon tiles poster in *Dragon Magazine* is the latest example of that innovation. What a great and relatively inexpensive resource for miniatures! Please don't let this be a one-time-only handout. I have visions in my head of dungeon room tiles, temple and tavern tiles, furniture chips that can be cut out and placed onto the surface tiles, even trail and grotto wilderness tiles. These would even be great to provide as special downloads on your website. Tiles like this would be something I would happily pay for. My group has only recently started using miniatures, but we have become very enthusiastic about by the level of detail it lends to combat and movement, and we are constantly looking for ways to increase the depth and utility of miniatures while keeping the cost down. I can tell you right now, your tiles win our vote, hands down.

Kris Koch
York, PA

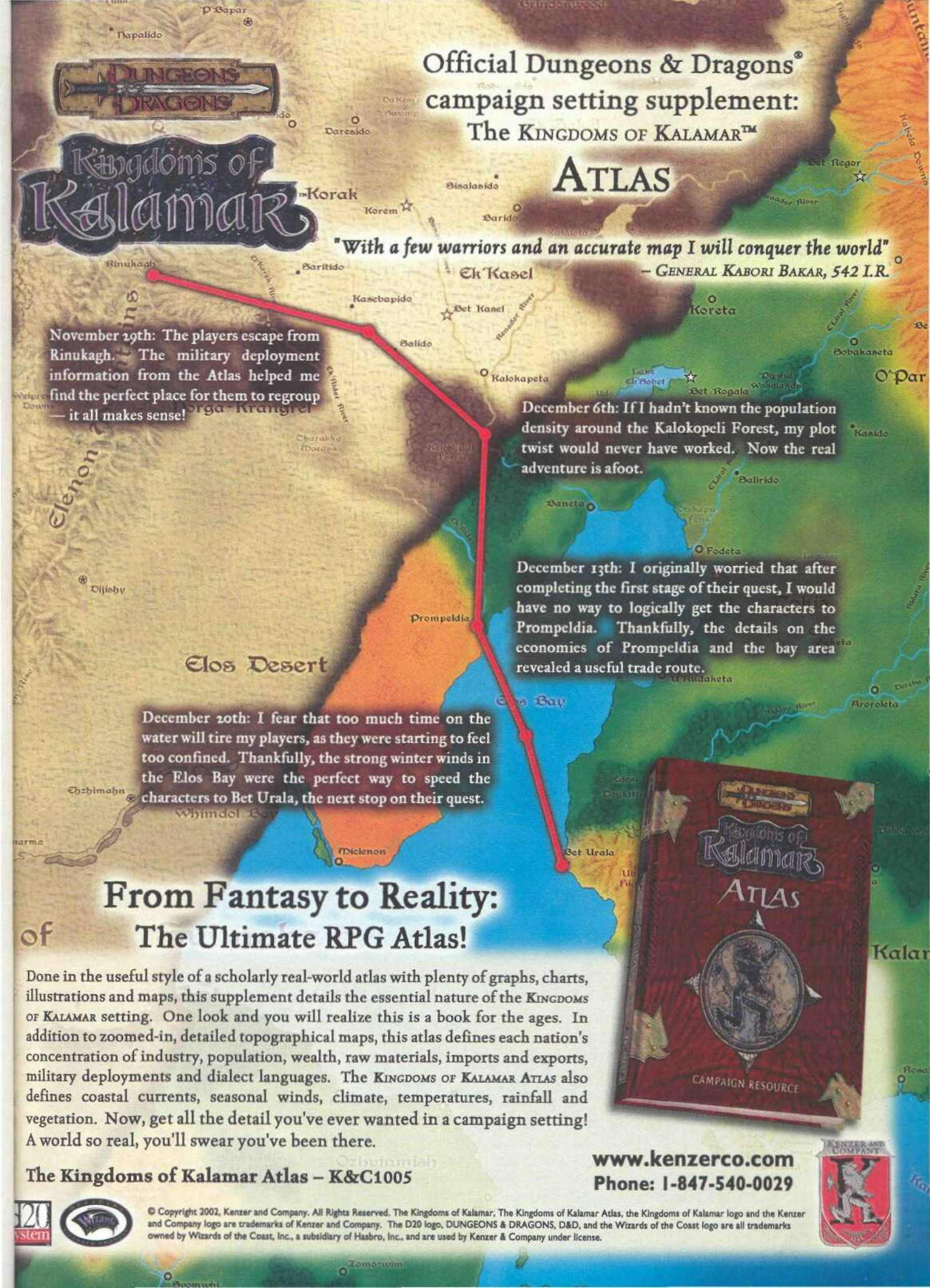
Next issue has a new approach to dungeon tiles—a blend of the painted tiles and more generic battlemats. Let us know what you think about the new approach, and we'll give you more of whatever you prefer.

What's My Name?

In response to Jesse Decker's editorial in issue #294, my character's catchphrase is his name. Arakul has been adding titles to his name to reflect his abilities (at least in his mind), and although only 4th level, his vigorous assault upon the forces of darkness have left him with a name that is a mouthful. Now whenever we go into town and the guards ask for our names, the party groans because they know what is coming . . . "I am Arakul the Great, Slayer of Goblins, Crusher of Ogres, Tree-Thrower, Hurrkal's Berserker, Breaker of Fish-People, Devourer of Cats, Sea-Serpent's Bane."

It's kind of funny now to see how quickly the other characters try to prevent people from asking my character's name, and we've had quite a few laughs when Arakul has gotten angry with someone for interrupting before he is done.

John Wright
Cookeville, TN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Atlas
"With a few warriors and an accurate map I will conquer the world"
– General Kabori Bakar, 542 I.R.
November 29th: The players escape from Rinukagh. The military deployment information from the Atlas helped me find the perfect place for them to regroup — it all makes sense!
December 6th: If I hadn't known the population density around the Kalokopeli Forest, my plot twist would never have worked. Now the real adventure is afoot.
December 13th: I originally worried that after completing the first stage of their quest, I would have no way to logically get the characters to Prompeldia. Thankfully, the details on the economies of Prompeldia and the bay area revealed a useful trade route.
December 20th: I fear that too much time on the water will tire my players, as they were starting to feel too confined. Thankfully, the strong winter winds in the Elos Bay were the perfect way to speed the characters to Bet Urala, the next stop on their quest.
Rinukagh
Saritido
Ek Kasel
Kasebapido
Bet Kasel
Koreta
Salido
Kalokapeta
Bet Regala
Bobakaseta
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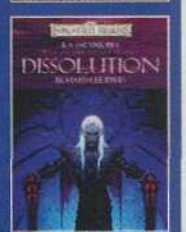

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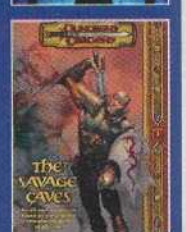

No Mindreading

Of issue #293, I can say only this: I think *DRAGON*'s staff has planted some kind of device in my head and can hear my thoughts. Specifically, the Robin D. Laws article about structuring campaigns like TV shows. I have been doing this for ages, even giving each episode a name. I have taken it a little further and divided my campaign into "seasons" of roughly 10-12 episodes each. Thus, I have climactic season finales that are designed to place players in suspense and generally scare the bejeezus out of them. For example, my season four finale involved the PCs stopping the villain (who was not actually a bad man) from destroying a city to stop a war. At the end, the scroll he was using went off, and I left the players with a "to be continued. . . ."

The beauty of the episodal structure is that it makes it a little easier to accommodate players who often miss sessions, of which I have several, and it makes it unbelievably easy to slot in guest players or new NPCs. I wholeheartedly congratulate Robin D. Laws on his magnificent work and just ask him politely to stop stealing my thoughts.

James Gadbois
Portland, ME

Most of the D&D games here at Wizards of the Coast actually include more players than are expected to show up every night—the idea being that with six players in the group, it's much more likely that four will be able to play when game night comes around. Robin D. Laws did a great job of describing a gaming style that fits in with life's other commitments and handles this kind of player attendance pattern.

Change is Good

In response to J. Jackson's letter that appeared in issue #293, I am sorry that he thinks that 3rd Edition is so unplayable, but I was disappointed that his seemingly endless barrage of complaints about the system, although loud, offered no real constructive criticism. I must disagree with the complaints made about the new edition and say that I have not enjoyed D&D as much as I have since the birth of this new edition. Surely there must be many more players who counted down each month as I did, eagerly awaiting the release of the new *Player's Handbook*.

In my opinion, 3rd Edition offered a springboard for new players to join the hobby and reined in old players like myself who had drifted away from the genre. The feats and skills are easy to pick up and help keep novice players on the straight and narrow in the growth and development of their characters, while the prestige classes give veteran players new avenues to explore with their characters.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to explore new character classes, races, prestige classes, and even the psionics system with this new edition. I have yet to look back on my decision of getting back into roleplaying games with any regret.

I have never once considered 3rd Edition to be the end of D&D, and I resent the fact that players like J. Jackson would vilify anyone who stands up in favor of it. If a product line can get players as excited about gaming as this one has, then I can't wait for the next book (or the next edition for that matter) to be released.

What is most distressing to me, however, is that for someone who claims to be the DM of thirty players, J. Jackson should be well aware of how fast a DM can kill the creativity of a group by simply not allowing a class, race, feat, and so on merely at the DM's own discretion and without any discussion whatsoever. If I were in your group, J. Jackson, and you announced that the new edition was going to be strictly off limits, I would pick up my books, call it a day, and go seek out a new group to game with.

Scott Sloan
Vacaville, CA

What I like about the new edition, more than anything else, is the emphasis on player choice. Allowing choices and options encourages creativity, and if it also teaches players about game balance and sound mechanics along the way, all the better. D

This land will be mine.

I've fought this far
from my court at Magdeburg
through the hellish forest of Tuzföld
to this battlefield.

And I will fight on,
commanding my Teutonic Knights
in the name of my lord, Hardestadt.

Victory is mine by right.

It is the Year of our Lord 1230.

This new age is a time of war.

*A time to take up arms in the darkness
against those who would rob you
of your dark birthright.*

*Draw your sword,
hone your wits
and shore up your faith.*

*The time has come to join
the War of Princes.*

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Up on a Soapbox
Lesson #10

All I Need to Know I learned from D&D
Place It, and They Will Come

by Gary Gygax © 2001 Gary Gygax. All rights reserved.

Defying the Odds

The rewards of playing a roleplaying game are plentiful: There is the comradery and fellowship as the players meet to play the next session, the imagination is stimulated, and the mind is challenged to find creative solutions to problems and then rewarded with a feeling of accomplishment when those solutions prove correct.

There are also tangible rewards for the players' characters, which serve as a means of measuring the PCs' performance. The most obvious of these are accumulating experience points and gaining levels, but gaining magical items and wealth are also valued rewards. Certainly, a clever DM can add to this list of rewards by bringing in special trappings for characters. These include fame and renown, gaining dedicated followers, and earning titles. When it comes to value to the character, however, nothing is quite as desirable to most players as potent, useful magic items.

With that in mind, imagine that you are back with me in 1973, watching me work on the game. I am feverishly drawing dungeon level maps, placing encounters, and choosing what will be found by PCs if the encounter is handled in a successful manner. To be repetitive is undesirable, so it is up to me to come up with ways to keep the encounters fresh, even if I cannot always come up with new monsters. I've finally finished mapping an extension of the fourth level, and all the monsters have been placed. I've placed a large band of gnolls in an out-of-the-way corner, and while they'll present a reasonable challenge, they aren't all that interesting. Perhaps I can spice it up with a new magic item? I decide to place a few gold coins and then hide something never seen before, a *portable hole*, off in a dead-end corridor behind the gnolls' lair. I chuckle at my cleverness, knowing it will be a long time before anyone finds this prize. After all, the main area of this level has been pretty well explored, so it is highly unlikely that any of the PCs will check out this area.

Tenser decides he is ready for a little dungeon-delving, so adventure time it is. He quickly heads directly for the 4th-level, much to my dismay. When I ask him why he wants to head to an already explored area, he responds, "Your map shows an area there that is still unexplored." Wondering what motivated the map checking in the first place, I preside over Tenser's exploration and am astonished when he almost immediately finds and begins to roam about in my just-completed extension. My wonder increases as he heads directly to the place where the gnolls lurk, trounces them completely by use of clever spells and some hand-to-hand combat, and then loots in thorough fashion. Tenser checks the surrounding area, including the dead-end passage. After being told that the place is empty except for a jagged hole in the floor, which he avoids easily, he explains that he wants to poke the edge of the hole with his 10-foot pole.

The rest of that adventure went something like this, "Yes, it moves; Yes, it comes up when you lift it; You have what must be a *portable hole* that's up to 10 feet deep and four feet in diameter."

What can I say? Among other special items of this sort, Tenser also managed to find the only *vorpal blade* I ever placed in the dungeons, and like the *portable hole,* he did so almost immediately after I'd placed the item. Thus, the moral to this tale is brief. Call it mind-reading, prescience, or whatever you will—place it and they will come. D

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Epic Monsters

A Hero is Defined by the Strength of His Enemies

by Mat Smith

Most of the experience you gain as an adventurer comes from fighting monsters, and by the time you hit 21st level, you've already gone toe-to-toe with some pretty tough customers. While some of your character's most recent opponents might still put up a good fight, they're nothing compared to what you'll find waiting for you when the *Epic Level Handbook* releases next month.

Epic Monsters

Damage reduction, spell resistance, various immunities, and special attacks are just the start of what makes epic monsters so tough. They've got armor classes, ability scores, saving throws, and Hit Dice that just about any character would covet, as well as epic skills, epic feats, and a pile of other assorted special abilities and qualities. And with a selection of new templates to add to the dozens of creatures that are already nastier than you'd like, your Dungeon Master is going to have a hard time deciding what to let your characters fight first.

Here's a fine example of just one of the creatures your adventuring party might accidentally stumble upon soon after entering the world of epic-level play. (You certainly wouldn't want to run into one on purpose.)

Thorciasid (by Bruce Cordell)

Medium-Size Aberration
Hit Dice: 29d8+348 (478 hp)
Initiative: +22 (+14 Dex, +8 Superior Initiative)
Speed: 70 ft.
AC: 42 (+14 Dex, +18 natural)
Attacks: 2 forelimbs +36 melee touch attack, 2 antennae +30 melee touch attack
Damage: Touch 0 + ability drain, antennae 0 + energy drain
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Ability drain, energy drain, spell-like abilities, cocoon
Special Qualities: Damage reduction 20/+6, darkvision 240 ft., scent, SR 34, fire resistance 30
Saves: Fort +21, Ref +25, Will +25
Abilities: Str 22, Dex 38, Con 34, Int 25, Wis 29, Cha 31
Skills: Bluff +30, Concentration +32, Diplomacy +12, Hide +24, Intimidate +12, Listen +27, Move Silently +24, Spot +41
Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse (forelimb), Weapon Finesse (antennae), Weapon Focus (forelimb)
Epic Feats: Blinding Speed, Superior Initiative

Climate/Terrain: Any
Organization: Solitary, pair, or infestation (4-7)
Challenge Rating: 22
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Usually Neutral
Advancement: 30-36 HD (Medium-size), 37-42 HD (Large)

Thorciasids are the ultimate parasite, preying on the life force of all other creatures.

Thorciasids are insectoid creatures. Like a particularly lean (and monstrously large) cockroach, a thorciasid is quick, multilimbed, and the color of burnt wood. It scuttles about on four hind limbs, using two fiendish forelimbs and two writhing antennae to deliver life-draining attacks.

Thorciasids sometimes cocoon their prey against future needs, hiding them away in large, multichambered, cunningly hidden nests built on the undersides of buildings, cliffsides, sewers, very large seagoing or planar-going craft, or other surprising areas.

Thorciasids speak Common, Elven, Dwarven, and Giant.

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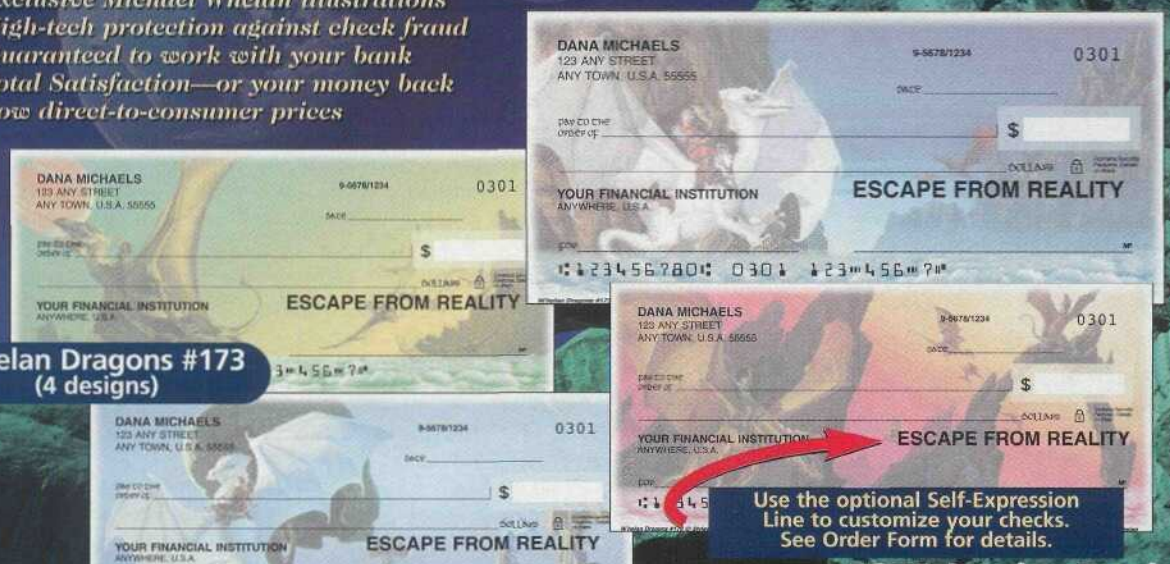

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Combat

Thorciasids are amazingly quick and agile, a trait they take full advantage of in combat. If a thorciasid catches a foe flat-footed, its first action is to attempt to use its cocoon ability to tether a foe in place. If facing several foes, it might tether one foe in place in order to concentrate its energy-draining melee touch attacks on others, then return to the original foe to finish the cocooning process. During standard combat, a thorciasid always makes full use of its Spring Attack feat in order to keep its foes moving around, especially if the thorciasid can move a foe into an area where it has prepared a trap (which is possible if the fight is taking place in a thorciasid's nest).

Cocoon (Ex): A thorciasid can eject a stream of noxious goo that hardens on contact, potentially fixing a subject in place and hindering its movement and actions. Using a standard action, the thorciasid makes a ranged touch attack against any creature it can see up to 60 feet away. If it succeeds at the ranged touch attack, the subject makes a grapple check against the cocoon. This is accomplished as if the thorciasid itself were making the grapple with a competence bonus of +10, for a total check modifier of +32. On a failed check for the subject, the goo hardens into a partial cocoon, and the victim is treated as if grappled (even though the thorciasid is free to do as it desires). The subject can attempt to break the grapple of the cocoon (or use the Escape Artist skill) each round, making an opposed grapple check against the cocoon (check modifier +32 for the cocoon).

A thorciasid can reinforce a partial cocoon by spending a standard action secreting additional goo. Each action spent in this manner provides an additional +5 to the cocoon's grapple check modifier. As additional goo is secreted, the victim becomes more and more covered until he is completely encased in the cocoon. Fully encased victims can still breathe, and thorciasids can drain the victim's life force at leisure.

Ability Drain (Su): On a successful melee touch attack with a forelimb, the thorciasid permanently drains 1d4+1 points of Strength, 1d4+1 points of Dexterity, and 1 point of Constitution from the victim. The thorciasid heals 20 lost hit points with each successful ability drain.

Energy Drain (Su): On a successful melee touch attack with an antenna, the thorciasid gives the victim one negative level. Each negative level bestowed upon a victim gives the thorciasid a +1 bonus to its Constitution that lasts for 24 hours, at which time the victim must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 36) to avoid level loss. A combination of the thorciasid's ability drain and energy drain abilities provides the creature all the "nutrition" it needs to survive.

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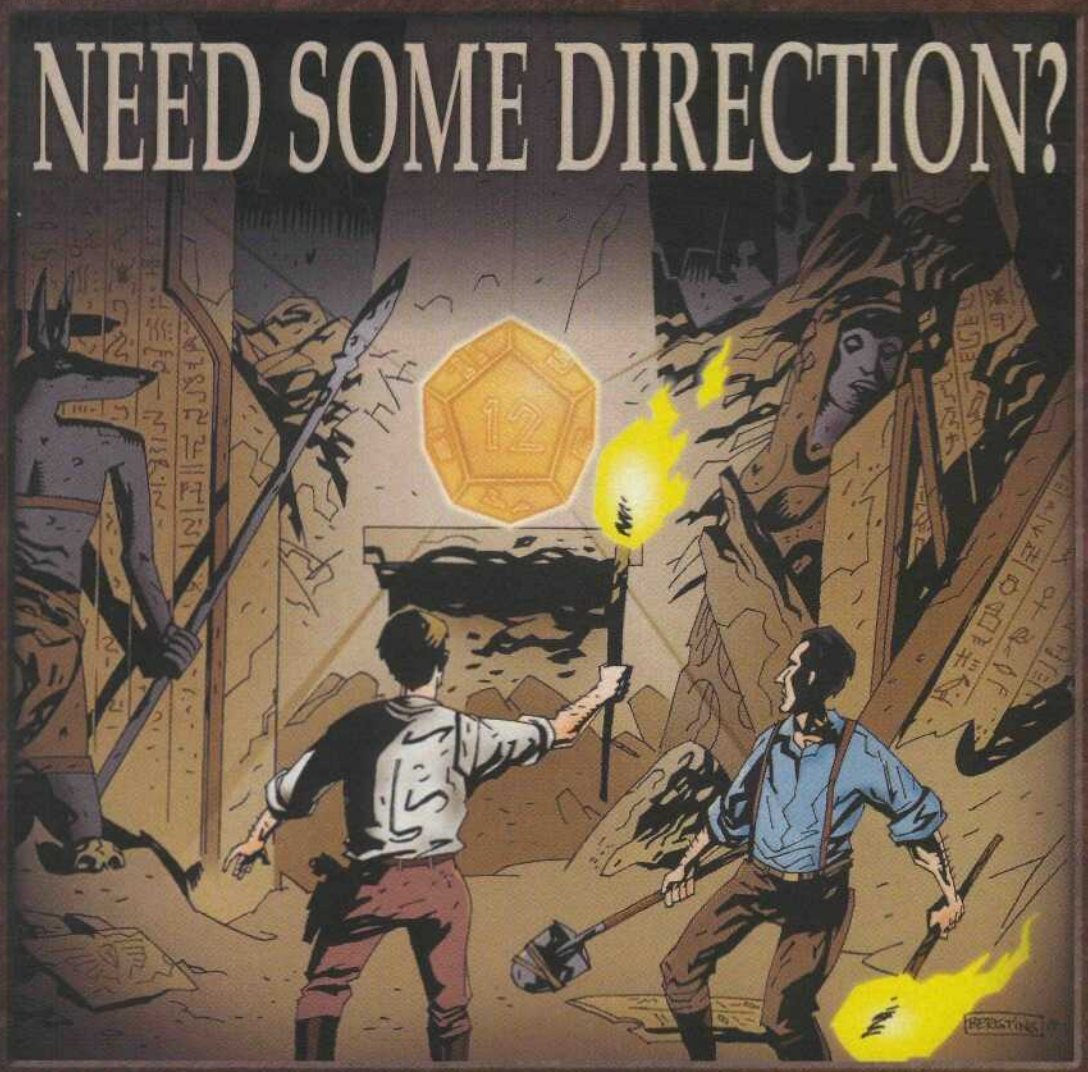

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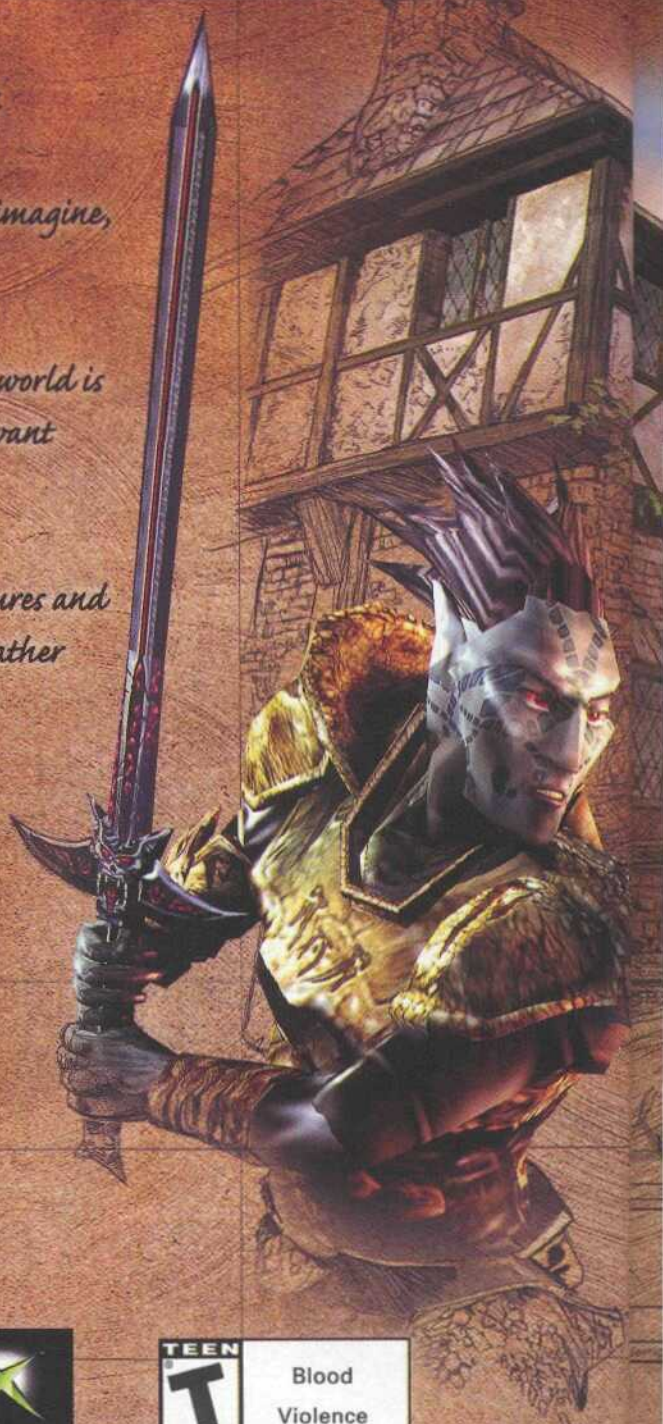

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by Keith Strohm with Dragon Staff • illustrated by Chris Appel

DRAGON Hunters

Four Foolhardy Prestige Classes

The secrets of dragons are deeper than any ocean; their cunning, as dark as night.
—Kharthon Es,
Dragonscribe of Cthar

Dragon. The very name conjures images of white-hot flaming breath, shimmering scales, and wicked claws capable of rending flesh from bone. Some believe that dragons are intricately connected with creation and that the oldest forms of the draconic language contain echoes of that primal event, powering the strongest spells and artifacts. Still others view dragons as embodiments of destruction and evil, for the power of a dragon can raze a kingdom, and its motives run far deeper than most folk—human or otherwise—can comprehend. Whether or not one subscribes to either of these elemental views of dragons, it is clear that the wisest mages whisper of their deep affiliation with magic, and even experienced warriors of stout heart and thew fear to face these creatures in battle.

Yet in every age there are individuals who raise sword and spell against dragons wherever they appear. Whether for good or ill, for noble or selfish reasons, these folk pit mortal courage against draconic strength and cunning. Many of these daring individuals die, yet some triumph, ultimately scarred but able to enjoy the fruits of their victory. Appearing below are four such dragon-killing types—although many more certainly exist.

The Dragonscribe

Occasionally from the ranks of the learned and wise comes an individual who devotes himself totally to the study of draconic lore. Unlike many seekers of knowledge, dragonscribes do not simply pore over moldering tomes and ancient scrolls. Rather, they travel across the breadth of the world (and across planes, if necessary) to speak, question, contact, and bargain with living dragons.

Although a dragonscribe's single-minded focus and devotion to esoteric knowledge might cause others to view him as a cold, uncaring individual, a passionate heart beats beneath his dirtied robes and studious mien. Despite this, a dragonscribe generally eschews most human contact—although he seldom hesitates to associate with individuals or groups that could aid his quest—and has a tendency to hoard knowledge like his draconic subjects hoard treasure. Though generally unconcerned about questions of good and evil, some dragonscribes utilize their abilities for selfish gain, harnessing their great power in service to their ambition or desire to dominate.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the dragonscribe prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Dragonscribes gain no new proficiency with weapons or armor.

Spells Per Day/Spells Known: Because the dragonscribe continues in the pursuit of magical knowledge and perfection, members of this class gain new spells per day and spells known as if they gained a level in a spellcasting class that they belonged to before adding the prestige class. For example, Inkardus, a 10th-level wizard/1st-level loremaster, gains a new level and wishes to pursue the dragonscribe prestige class. Because of his previous prestige class, Inkardus casts a number of spells per day equivalent to an 11th-level wizard. Adding a level of dragonscribe allows the mage to cast a number of spells per day as if he was a 12th-level wizard.

If a character possessed more than one spellcasting class before he became a dragonscribe, he must decide which class will receive the additional spellcasting level for purposes of determining spells per day when he adds the new level.

Dragonlore: At 1st level, dragonscribes gain an ability similar to the bardic knowledge ability that pertains only to dragons. Unlike the bard's bardic knowledge ability, dragonlore comes not from random wanderings but instead from scraps of long-lost knowledge, hidden tomes, and other obscure sources. To use the dragonlore ability, the dragonscribe makes a special dragonlore check with a bonus equal to his dragonscribe level + Intelligence bonus.

Dragonscribes with bard levels may add their bard levels to this check as well; however, dragonscribe levels do not stack with a bard's normal use of the bardic knowledge ability.

Some example dragonlore DCs are listed in the Dragonlore DCs sidebar.

Overcome Resistance (Ex): Extensive meditation and research on the customs, thoughts, and personalities of dragons affords dragonscribes a deep insight into their ways. This insight allows a dragonscribe to more easily penetrate a dragon's innate spell resistance. Whenever the dragonscribe casts a spell that affects a creature with the dragon type, he gains a +2 bonus to caster level checks to overcome the dragon's spell resistance (if any), and for the dragon, the spell's saving throw DC is increased by +2. These bonuses stack with the Spell Penetration and Spell Focus feats.

When the dragonscribe casts a spell that affects more than one creature, these bonuses still apply, but they apply only to creatures with the dragon type.

Dragon Tongue (Ex): Supported by their tremendous knowledge and magical power, dragonscribes are much more adept at convincing dragons to cooperate and interact peacefully with them. At the very least, should a dragonscribe be faced with a draconic foe too powerful for him to overcome, he is often able to exchange knowledge of other dragons in return for the dragon

Dragonscribe Requirements

To qualify to become a dragonscribe, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria:

Diplomacy: 7 ranks.

Knowledge (arcana): 13 ranks.

Feats: Spell Penetration, Iron Will.

Language: Draconic.

Special: The character must have observed at least three different kinds of dragons personally.

Special: The character must be able to cast a 2nd-level or higher arcane spell from the Abjuration, Conjuration, and Divination schools.

Dragonscribe Class Skills

The dragonscribe's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

Str: –

Dex: –

Con: Concentration.

Int: Alchemy, Decipher Script (exclusive skill), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually), Scry, Spellcraft.

Wis: Sense Motive.

Cha: Gather Information, Use Magic Device (exclusive skill).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Dragonscribe Advancement

Hit Die: d4

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Dragonlore	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Overcome resistance	+1 level of existing class
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Dragon tongue	+1 level of existing class
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	*Summon dragon*	+1 level of existing class
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	*Draconic binding*	+1 level of existing class

Dragonlore DCs

Example	DC
Identifying a dragon's age and color from a rough description.	10
Identifying a dragon's size from signs of its passage.	15
Identifying a dragon's name, age, and origin after an encounter.	20
Identifying a dragon's special abilities and spells known from its description.	25
Determining the location of a dragon's lair from scraps of information.	30

sparing his life. This ability grants a +5 competence bonus to Diplomacy checks when dealing with creatures with the dragon type.

Summon Dragon (Sp): Dragonscribes who are able to cast *summon monster* spells gain the ability to choose fiendish and celestial dragons in addition to the other monsters on the summon lists. Treat the list below as a class-exclusive addition to the *summon monster* table in the *Player's Handbook*. Note that most dragons on the list are slightly more powerful than the other monsters available at a given level; this exemplifies the dragonscribe's close connection to dragons and the innate power of the dragon species.

Summon Monster III
Celestial brass dragon (wyrmling) (CG)
Fiendish white dragon (wyrmling) (CE)

Summon Monster IV
Celestial bronze dragon (wyrmling) (LG)
Fiendish blue dragon (wyrmling) (CE)

Summon Monster V
Celestial copper dragon (very young) (CG)
Fiendish green dragon (very young) (LE)
Fiendish Wyvern (NE)

Summon Monster VI
Celestial brass dragon (juvenile) (CG)
Fiendish white dragon (juvenile) (CE)

Summon Monster VII
Celestial brass dragon (young adult) (CG)
Fiendish black dragon (young adult) (LE)

Summon Monster VIII
Celestial bronze dragon (adult) (LG)
Fiendish blue dragon (adult) (LE)

Summon Monster IX
Celestial silver dragon (adult) (LG)
Fiendish red dragon (adult) (CE)

Draconic Binding (Sp): The apex of a dragonscribe's power rests in his ability to bind a dragon or other intelligent draconic creature to his service. Manipulating powerful magical forces focused through words of power spoken in the primal draconic tongue, the dragonscribe can control the mind of a draconic creature. This ability functions exactly like a *dominate monster* spell cast by a sorcerer with a level equal to the dragonscribe's spellcaster level, except that it only affects creatures with the dragon type. The DC to resist the effect is equal to 19 + the dragonscribe's Charisma modifier. The dragonscribe can use this ability once per day.

Knight of the Scale

Bolstered by the divine power of their god and driven by the force of their sacred duty, knights of the scale travel throughout the world raising sword and shield against the threat of dragonkind. Undaunted by the primal fury of formidable breath weapons and razor-edged claws, these stalwart heroes do battle wherever the taint of draconic evil gains a foothold.

Unlike their more traditional noble counterparts, knights of the scale (also referred to as scale knights) are called from every social rank and caste, causing some hidebound folk to cast a disdainful glance whenever they make an appearance. Despite the vagaries of their breeding, these fierce warriors embody a nobility of spirit and purity of purpose that shines forth when confronted by a draconic adversary. Knights of the scale do not throw caution to the wind and foolishly charge into battle with a dragon, preferring instead to plan as carefully as possible. However, bravery, courage, and strength are paramount for these characters. Scale knights seek to face and defeat dragons through force of arms, faith, and intellect while remaining true to the strict dictates of their honor and sense of duty. Sneaking in to a black dragon's cavern and dropping the ceiling upon its head would be anathema to them, for example.

Paladins, fighters, and clerics make excellent knights of the scale. Some barbarians also find themselves called to this pursuit, while rogues and arcane spellcasters rarely don the armor and shield of a scale knight.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the knight of the scale prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Knights of the scale gain proficiency with all simple and martial weapons, with all types of armor, and with shields.

Blood of Heroes (Su): Bathed in the radiance of their deity's power, knights of the scale are immune to a dragon's frightful presence. In addition, all allies within 10 feet of the knight receive a +4 morale bonus to their Will saves versus this fear-generating effect. If the knight of the scale also possesses a paladin's aura of courage, her protective emanation improves, extending immunity to the frightful presence ability to all allies within 10 feet. Any protected companion who moves beyond the range of this protective field must immediately make a Will save to resist

the effects of the dragon's frightful presence.

Detect Dragon (Sp): At will, the knight of the scale can detect the presence of dragons as a spell-like ability. This ability is identical to the *detect evil* spell except that it detects only creatures with the dragon type (regardless of alignment), and there is no chance for the knight to become stunned.

Dragonslaying (Su): Energized by the might of her deity, a scale knight receives a +1 morale bonus to her attack rolls starting at 2nd level when combating dragons and other draconic creatures. On a successful attack roll, she inflicts an additional 1d6 points of holy damage.

At 8th level, the bonus increases to +2 and +2d6 holy damage.

Sacred Shield (Su): Knights of the scale receive a +2 sacred bonus to all saves against a dragon's spells and supernatural abilities, as the hand of their god protects them from harm. This bonus increases to +4 at 7th level.

Shatter Scale (Su): Once per day, a scale knight can summon the wrath of her deity and focus it in one melee attack against a creature with the dragon type. When doing so, she receives a +4 bonus on her melee attack roll and a damage bonus equal to her knight of the scale class level.

Mount (Su): At 5th-level, the knight of the scale can call a special winged mount to carry her into the air. The knight of the scale can choose either a celestial griffon, a celestial pegasus (advanced to 6 hit dice), a celestial giant eagle (advanced to 6 hit dice), or a celestial giant owl (advanced to 6 hit dice).

Should a knight of the scale's mount fall, she can call for another one after a year and a day.

A knight of the scale with paladin levels does not gain the mount ability. Instead, her knight of the scale levels stack with her paladin levels to determine the power of her special mount.

Ride-By Attack: At 6th level, the knight of the scale gains the Ride-By Attack feat.

Heal Mount (Sp): Once per day, the knight of the scale can cast the *heal mount* spell as a paladin with a level equal to the knight's character level.

Righteous Charge (Su): Once per day after attaining 10th level, a knight of the scale can open her being to the pure power of her deity and use the divine energy to make a devastating charge attack. When mounted and using the charge action against a creature with the dragon type, a knight of the scale deals double damage with a melee weapon (or triple damage with a lance). If the knight already has the Spirited Charge feat, the damage from a charge attack is tripled against a draconic foe (or quadrupled when using a lance).

Undaunted by formidable breath weapons and razor-edged claws, these stalwart heroes do battle wherever the taint of draconic evil gains a foothold.

Knight of the Scale Requirements

To qualify to become a knight of the scale, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria:

Alignment: Any good.

Base Attack Bonus: +6.

Knowledge (arcana): 4 ranks.

Ride: 9 ranks.

Feats: Mounted Combat, Weapon Focus (Lance, heavy).

Special: A character seeking to become a knight of the scale must have killed a dragon (either singly or as part of a group) of young adult age or older and commissioned a suit of armor constructed from its scales.

Knight of the Scale Class Skills

The knight of the scale's class skills and the key ability for each skill are:

Str: Climb, Jump, Swim.

Dex: Ride.

Con: Concentration.

Int: Knowledge (all skills, taken individually).

Wis: Heal.

Cha: Diplomacy, Handle Animal.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Knight of the Scale Advancement

Hit Die: d10

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Blood of heroes, *detect dragon*
2nd	+2	+2	+0	+0	Sacred shield +2
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Dragonslaying +1/1d6
4th	+4	+3	+1	+1	Shatter scale
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Mount
6th	+6	+4	+2	+2	Ride-By Attack
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	Sacred shield +4
8th	+8	+5	+2	+2	Dragonslaying +2/2d6
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	*Heal mount*
10th	+10	+6	+3	+3	Righteous charge

Heartseekers

Kin to the mystical arcane archers that protect and defend elven communities, heartseekers (or the quelaenvyn, as the elves name them in their ancient language) defend the hidden enclaves of their people from draconic invasion through the skillful blending of physical prowess and arcane might. Masters of the traditional elven art of archery and devotees of magic, heartseekers specialize in delivering ranged attacks designed to pierce the physical and magical defenses that make dragons and their kin such feared adversaries. They are often the elves' first line of defense against the depredations of a dragon.

Unlike the insular arcane archers, members of this renowned order have spread their special blend of archery and magic to other races. Because of this, heartseekers enjoy a special place in many communities, although they can still seem abrupt and standoffish to those outside the order. Despite their perceived haughtiness, they recognize acts of bravery and skill in battle no

matter its source, and members of the order are willing to stretch out their hand in friendship to any who consistently demonstrate such traits. Once befriended by a heartseeker, a person can find no better companion.

Elven leaders often deploy heartseekers among bands of arcane archers to bolster the former's magical abilities with the arcane prowess of these more spell-oriented elven defenders. Few non-elven communities boast more than a handful of heartseekers, making their role in large engagements somewhat limited.

Heartseekers have also been known to travel beyond the confines of their homeland and join with small bands of adventurers, usually to fulfill a perilous quest relating to the defense of an elven community.

Wizards and sorcerers (often with a few levels of fighter or ranger) who devote themselves to the martial side of combat are the most likely adventurers to become heartseekers. Fighters, rangers, and even rogues who dabble in arcane study occasionally find themselves members of this order. Monks, barbarians, and paladins rarely become heartseekers.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the heartseeker prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Heartseekers gain no new proficiency with weapons or armor.

Spells Per Day: Because heartseekers continue in the pursuit of magical knowledge and perfection, for every other level they gain in this prestige class, heartseekers gain new spells per day and spells known as if they gained a level in an arcane spellcasting class that they belonged to before adding the prestige class. If a character possessed more than one arcane spellcasting class before he became a heartseeker, he must decide which class will receive the additional spellcasting level for purposes of determining spells per day when he adds the new level.

Piercing Spell (Ex): The heartseeker's focus on creatures with the dragon type gives him a +2 bonus to his caster level checks against a dragon's spell resistance. This bonus increases to +4 at 5th level and +6 at 9th level. This bonus stacks with the Spell Penetration and Greater Spell Penetration feats.

Lodestone Arrow (Su): Once per day, a 2nd-level heartseeker can imbue an arrow with the power of the very earth around him. On a successful attack roll, any winged or flying creature struck by the lodestone arrow must make a Fortitude save (base DC = 15 + class level + Charisma bonus) or fall immediately to the ground, its ability to fly nullified by the arrow's magic. Grounded creatures take any applicable falling damage and cannot return to the sky until the duration of the effect expires—although they can still attack and move on the ground normally.

The lodestone arrow lasts for 1 round per every two heartseeker levels of the attacker.

Brilliant Energy Arrow (Su): Through his devotion to the arcane arts, a heartseeker can transform an arrow fired at a creature with the dragon type to a brilliant energy weapon. This arrow functions exactly as an arrow with the brilliant energy special quality. A heartseeker can use this ability as a free action on a total of three arrows per day.

Heartseeker (Su): Channeling his arcane power along with his love for the elven homeland he defends, a heartseeker can transform a single arrow per day into a *greater slaying arrow* keyed to any creature with the dragon type. It takes a full round for a heartseeker to transform an arrow in this way. The enchantment lasts no longer than a day, and the character can only have one such arrow in existence at a time.

The vengeance sworn are relentless, implacable foes, hurling themselves against their draconic enemies armed only with steel weapons and bitter fury.

Greater Enchantment (Ex): Whenever a heartseeker casts *greater magic weapon* on his arrows, treat the spell as if it were cast by a spellcaster with a level equal to the heartseeker's class level plus his levels from his previous spellcasting class. For example, Elatharis, a 10th-level wizard/5th-level heartseeker, normally casts arcane spells as a 12th-level caster. However, when casting *greater magic weapon* on his arrows, he casts the spell as a 15th-level caster.

Bane Missile (Su): Once per day, as a full-round action, a 4th-level heartseeker can prepare and fire a special arrow called a bane missile. If a bane missile strikes a creature with the dragon type, it deals an additional 1d6 points of damage per three heartseeker levels and ignores damage reduction.

Spellgift Arrow (Su): Once per day, as a full-round action, a 6th-level heartseeker can prepare and fire a special arrow called a spellgift arrow. If the spellgift arrow inflicts damage on a creature with the dragon type, the heartseeker gains an enhancement bonus equal to the damage inflicted to his caster level checks made to penetrate the injured creature's spell resistance for the next round only.

Heartseeker Requirements

To qualify to become a heartseeker, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +4.

Concentration: 8 ranks.

Knowledge (arcana): 8 ranks.

Listen: 5 ranks.

Spot: 5 ranks.

Feats: Combat Casting, Spell Penetration, Weapon Focus (any bow)

Spellcasting: Ability to cast arcane spells.

Heartseeker Class Skills

The heartseeker's class skills and the key ability for each skill are:

Str: Climb, Jump, Swim.

Dex: Ride.

Con: Concentration.

Int: Knowledge (all skills, taken individually), Spellcraft.

Wis: Listen, Spot, Wilderness Lore.

Cha: —

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Heartseeker Advancement

Hit Die: d6

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spells Per Day
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Piercing spell +2	
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Lodestone arrow	+1 level of class
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Greater enchantment	
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Bane missile	+1 level of class
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Piercing spell +4	
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5		+1 level of class
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Spellgift arrow	
8th	+6	+6	+2	+6	Brilliant energy arrow	+1 level of class
9th	+6	+6	+3	+6	Piercing spell +6	
10th	+7	+7	+3	+7	Heartseeker	+1 level of class

Vengeance Sworn

Born from the aftermath of dragon-wrought tragedy, death, and destruction, the vengeance sworn focus their hatred of dragons and their desire for revenge into a divinely sealed oath that drives them beyond the limits of mortal endurance. Battle-hardened and tested by the harsh environments in which they live, vengeance sworn characters travel through rugged mountains and across trackless seas to sate their burning desire for draconic blood.

In battle, the vengeance sworn are relentless, implacable foes, hurling themselves against the gleaming scales of their draconic enemies armed only with steel weapons and their bitter fury. Among the close-knit brotherhood of warriors, vengeance sworn are given wide berth, as their often single-minded purpose sets them at odds with their more mercenary brethren. Still, their reputation for ferocity and true skill in battle wins them a place among many adventuring groups.

The vengeance sworn are far from common, but multiclassed characters with levels in barbarian and either cleric or druid from more primitive cultures are the most likely characters to become

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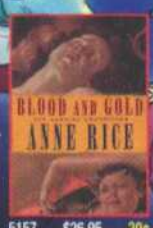

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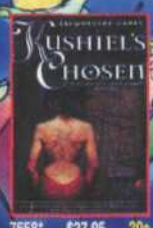

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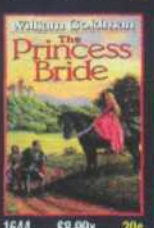

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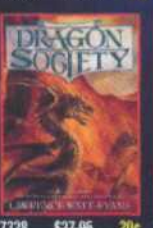

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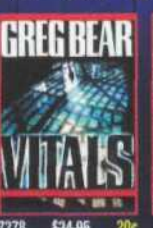

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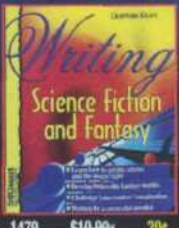

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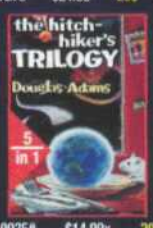

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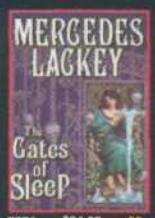

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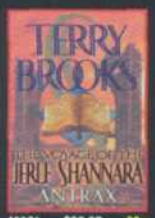

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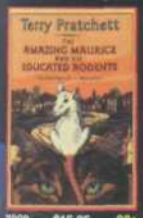

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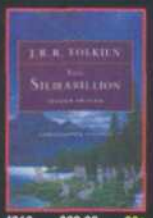

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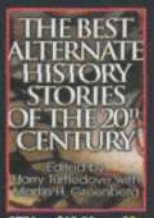

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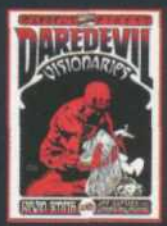

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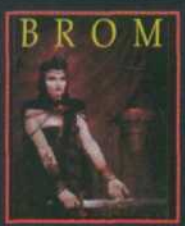

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members of the prestige class. Rogues, monks, wizards, sorcerers, and other arcane spellcasters, however, rarely take the single-minded oath that fuels the hearts and limbs of the vengeance sworn.

Bathed in the radiance of their deity's power, the vengeance sworn are immune to a dragon's frightful presence.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the vengeance sworn prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Vengeance sworn characters are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, as well as light and medium armor.

Spells Per Day: Because a vengeance sworn character continues in her worship of the divine, she increases her caster level and continues to gain new spells per day at 2nd, 6th, and 10th level. If a character possessed more than one divine spellcasting class before she became vengeance sworn, she must decide which class will receive the additional spellcasting level for purposes of determining spells per day.

Blood of Heroes (Su): Bathed in the radiance of their deity's power, the vengeance sworn are immune to a dragon's frightful presence. In addition, all allies within 10 feet of the vengeance sworn receive a +4 morale bonus to their Will saves against this fear-generating effect. In the unlikely event that the vengeance sworn also possesses a paladin's aura of courage, her protective emanation improves, extending her personal immunity to the frightful presence ability to all allies within 10 feet. Any protected companion who moves beyond the range of this protective field must immediately make a Will save to resist the effects of the dragon's frightful presence.

Might of Heroes (Ex): At 3rd level, anytime the vengeance sworn is inside the radius of a dragon's frightful presence ability, she gains a +2 sacred bonus to attacks, saves, and skill checks. This bonus applies only to rolls made against a creature with the dragon type, including attack rolls to hit the dragon, saving throws against the dragon's spells and abilities, and similar checks. In addition, the vengeance sworn must be fighting against the dragon; in the rare instance where a vengeance sworn might be allied with a dragon, the allied dragon's frightful presence ability does not trigger the might of heroes ability.

Rage (Ex): The oath-stirred fires of a vengeance sworn's anger allows her to rage one additional time per day. This ability functions exactly like the rage ability from the barbarian class (a prerequisite for this class). At 8th level, the vengeance sworn gains another daily use of the rage ability.

Shield of Fury (Su): At 5th level, the vengeance sworn receives a +2 sacred bonus to all saves against breath weapons, spells, and other abilities that originate with a creature with the dragon type. At 9th level, this bonus increases to +4.

Will of Heroes (Su): At 7th level, whenever the vengeance sworn is within the radius of an opposing dragon's frightful presence ability, she becomes immune to all Enchantment and Illusion effects.

Dragonslayer (Su): At 10th level, because of their passion and experience at fighting dragons, as well as their divinely inspired skills, vengeance sworn are more likely to inflict a critical hit whenever they battle a creature with the dragon type. This supernatural ability doubles the effective threat range of each of the vengeance sworn's attacks against a creature with the dragon type. This increase stacks with the Improved Critical feat and the keen weapon enhancement just like those effects stack with themselves (the increase affects the base threat range only, not the modified threat range). For example, a *+1 keen longsword* wielded by a vengeanance sworn with the Improved Critical (longsword) feat and the dragonslayer ability would have a threat range of 13-20. D

Vengeance Sworn Requirements

To qualify to become vengeance sworn, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria:

Base Attack Bonus: +6.

Intimidate: 5 ranks.

Knowledge (arcana): 5 ranks.

Wilderness Lore: 5 ranks.

Feats: Ambidexterity, Two-Weapon Fighting, Expertise.

Special Ability: Rage.

Spellcasting: Ability to cast 1st-level divine spells.

Special: Must have been killed by a dragon or had a loved one killed by a dragon.

Vengeance Sworn Class Skills

The vengeance sworn's class skills and the key ability for each skill are:

Str: Climb, Jump, Swim.

Dex: Hide, Ride.

Con: —

Int: Craft, Knowledge.

Wis: Intuit Direction, Listen, Wilderness Lore.

Cha: Handle Animal, Intimidate.

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Vengeance Sworn Advancement

Hit Die: d10

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Blood of heroes	
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0		+1 level of existing class
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Might of heroes	
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Rage	
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Shield of fury +2	
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2		+1 level of existing class
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	Will of heroes	
8th	+8	+6	+2	+2	Rage	
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	Shield of fury +4	
10th	+10	+7	+3	+3	Dragonslayer	+1 level of existing class

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Wing, Fang, and Spell

Notes for Dragon Hunters

by Skip Williams and Andy Collins
illustrated by Darrell Riche

Dragons combine speed, brains, and fearsome attack power, all of which make them more likely to become the hunter rather than the hunted. Dragons have even more advantages than superior intellect and great combat abilities, however.

Dragon Senses

Like any predatory creature, a dragon has acute senses. These remarkable senses become even more effective as a dragon grows and ages, mostly because a dragon's mind becomes ever more subtle and perceptive as the centuries pass. A dragon's eyes, ears, and nose might become only slightly sharper with age, but the dragon's prodigious intellect can sift ever more information from its environment, enabling the dragon to more fully utilize sensory input.

Vision

Dragons have vision superbly adapted to hunting. They have excellent depth perception, allowing them to judge distances with great accuracy, and they have excellent peripheral vision as well. Dragons can perceive motion and detail at least twice as well as a human in daylight, and their eyes adapt quickly to harsh light and glare. A dragon can stare at the sun on a clear summer day and suffer no loss of vision. Eagles and other birds of prey can perform similar visual feats.

Dragons also see exceedingly well in dim light. In moonlight, dragons see as well as they can in sunlight. In even dimmer light, a dragon sees four times as far as a human can under similar conditions. Dragons can even see when there is no light at all. This latter ability is perhaps not so extraordinary as it might seem, as many fantastic creatures can see in the dark.

When it has any light to see at all, a dragon sees in color. Its ability to discern hues is at least as good as a human's. In the absence of light, a dragon's vision is strictly black and white. Exactly how a dragon (or any other creature) is able to see when there is no light remains a mystery.

Scent

A dragon's sense of smell is nearly as well developed as its eyesight. A dragon detects smells as well as the best bloodhound, and it can notice and recognize an individual by smell from 30 feet away or more. This refined sense of smell is only partly dependent on the dragon's sensitive nose; it also uses its forked tongue to sample the air, much like a snake. A dragon's ability to sense the presence of other creatures by scent makes it difficult to catch a dragon unaware, and hiding from a dragon is nearly impossible once a dragon is close enough to pick up the quarry's scent.

Hearing

A dragon's ears are about as sensitive as human ears, and the range of tones a dragon can hear is similar to what a human can hear. Even the youngest dragon, however, has sharper hearing than a typical human, thanks to its ability to recognize important sounds for what they are and to filter out background noise.

A dragon's ability to perceive ultrasonic or subsonic frequencies is no better than a human's. Every dragon, however, has at least one rank of the Listen skill per Hit Die. Consequentially, they hear much better than most humans.

Blindsight

One outstanding example of a dragon's sensory prowess is its ability to "see" things that are invisible or completely obscured. By using its nose and ears, and also by noticing subtle clues such as air currents and vibrations, a dragon can perceive everything in its immediate vicinity, even when shrouded in magical darkness or swathed in impenetrable fog. Of course, some things are purely visual in nature (such as color), and a dragon that cannot see cannot perceive these things.

Errata

Although the *Monster Manual* does not list the scent ability among a dragon's special qualities, dragons have this ability. A dragon's scent has a range of 30 feet times the dragon's age category.

As noted in the *Monster Manual*, a dragon has blindsight with a range of 30 feet times the dragon's age category.

A dragon's blindsight defeats all purely visual impediments, such as fog, dust, and darkness. It likewise defeats vision-based glamers such as *invisibility, blur,* and *displacement,* as well as most figments; a creature relying on blindsight cannot "see" a figment that has only a visual element. Even when a dragon's vision is not impaired, a dragon notices most visual figments unless they also have auditory and olfactory elements that fool its hearing and scent.

Blindsight does not cross planar boundaries and does not reveal things on the Ethereal Plane unless the creature using blindsight is also on the Ethereal Plane.

Since a dragon's blindsight is partially based on hearing, deafness or magical silence can counter it to some extent. Invisible or unseen creatures within the area of a *silence* spell effectively have total concealment against a dragon's blindsight ability, as do invisible or unseen creatures facing a deafened dragon. The dragon can still target the creatures normally, but its melee or ranged attacks have a 50% miss chance. In cases where a dragon can partially see a foe that it cannot hear, the dragon uses the normal miss chance. For example, a dragon's blindsight ability normally negates the effects of a *blur* spell. If the dragon cannot hear, however, *blur* still imposes a 20% miss chance on a dragon's melee or ranged attacks.

Most forms of blindsight can detect only solid or liquid matter, and they cannot reveal incorporeal creatures. A dragon has some difficulty noting gaseous creatures with its blindsight (such creatures still make some noise and give off some scent). When a dragon fights a gaseous creature, it has half concealment (20% miss chance) if the dragon cannot see the gaseous creature or total concealment (50% miss chance) if the dragon can neither see nor hear the gaseous creature. In either case, the dragon can still target the gaseous creature normally.

Not even a dragon's blindsight reveals an incorporeal creature, because an incorporeal creature makes no noise and gives off no scent. If a dragon cannot see an incorporeal creature, the dragon cannot perceive it all and must guess at its location to attack it, as noted in the section on invisibility in Chapter 3 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide.*

Wyrm's Eye View

As noted in the *Monster Manual,* a dragon sees twice as well as a human in normal light. In game terms, this means that dragons spot potential foes at double the distances shown on Table 3–1 Spotting Distance in the *Dungeon Master's Guide.* Also, when a dragon makes Spot check, it suffers a -1 penalty per 20 feet of distance rather than the -1 per 10 feet of distance noted in the description of the Spot skill.

Also as noted in the *Monster Manual,* a dragon sees four times as well as a human in dim light. This ability is exactly like the low-light vision ability, except that the dragon sees four times as far when using artificial illumination. For example, a *light* spell illuminates a radius of 80 feet for a dragon.

A dragon's ability to see in the dark is the standard darkvision ability, albeit at very long range (100 feet x the dragon's age category.)

In addition to its superior visual capabilities, every dragon has at least one rank of the Spot skill per Hit Die, making it very sharp eyed.

Taste

A dragon's sense of taste is highly discriminating; dragons can note the slightest variations in the taste of water or food, and most dragons develop some peculiar culinary preferences as a result. Copper dragons, for example, relish venomous vermin. Perhaps the most infamous draconic taste is the red dragon's preference for virgin meat.

Curiously, dragons don't seem to respond well to sweet flavors. Whether this is because they don't like sweets or because they have difficulty ascertaining sweet flavors is unclear.

Touch

Thanks to its thick, scaly hide and clawed feet, a dragon has very little tactile sense. Smaller, younger dragons who have yet to develop really

impressive natural armor have better senses of touch than older dragons, making touch the only sense that gets worse as a dragon grows and ages. A dragon interested in an object's texture might touch or stroke the object with its tongue. Even so, a dragon's tongue proves better at tasting than touching.

A dragon's muted sense of touch might explain its preference for nests made from piles of coins, gems, or other treasure.

New Tricks for Old Dragons

Given the variable interval between uses of a dragon's breath weapon and the array of feats and spells available to it, it can be hard to predict what powers a dragon might display. Just to keep players guessing, here are a few new feats for the dragons in your campaign along with example dragons that use them:

Clinging Breath [Metabreath]

Your energy-based breath weapon clings to creatures and continues to affect them on the round after you breathe.

Prerequisite: Dragon, Con 13+

Benefit: Your breath weapon has its normal effects, but it also clings to anything caught in its area. The clinging breath weapon lasts one round beyond the initial attack. On the second round, the clinging breath weapon inflicts one half the damage it inflicted the previous round. Creatures that evade damage from the breath weapon (such as creatures with the evasion special quality or incorporeal creatures) do not suffer the extra damage. For example, an old silver dragon uses its cold breath and inflicts 72 points of cold damage (36 points with a successful saving throw). The following round, foes who failed their saves against the breath weapon suffer an additional 36 points of cold damage, and foes who made successful saves suffer 18 points of cold damage.

A foe can take a full-round action to attempt to remove the clinging breath weapon before taking any additional damage. It takes a successful Reflex saving throw (same DC as the initial breath weapon) to remove the effect. Rolling around on the ground grants a +2 to the saving throw but leaves the foe prone. The breath weapon cannot be removed or smothered by jumping into water. The clinging breath weapon can be magically dispelled (DC equal to the breath weapon's save DC).

This feat only works on breath weapons that have instantaneous durations and that inflict energy damage (acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic).

When you use this feat, you must wait one extra round before using your breath weapon again.

Special: You can apply this feat more than once to the same breath weapon. Each time you do, the clinging breath lasts an additional round.

Rend [General]

You can rend things you hit with your claws.

Prerequisite: Power Attack, Snatch, Str 13+

Benefit: If you strike the same opponent with two claw attacks, you automatically inflict additional damage equal to two claws plus 1 and 1/2 times your Strength bonus. You cannot grab an opponent at the same time you rend that opponent.

Wingstorm [General]

You can flatten targets with blasts of air from your wings.

Prerequisite: Dragon, fly speed 20+, Hover, Power Attack, size Large+, Str 13+

Benefit: As a full-round action, you can hover in place and use your wings to create a blast of air in a cylinder with a radius and height of 10 feet times your age category.

The wind blows from the center of your body down toward the ground. Creatures on the ground (including those driven to the ground by the use of this feat) are blown toward the edge of the cylinder.

The wind strength depends on your size:

Dragon Size	Wind Effect
Large	Severe
Huge	Windstorm
Gargantuan	Hurricane
Colossal	Tornado

Because the blast of air only lasts for your turn, creatures ignore the checked wind effect unless they are airborne (in which case they are blown back 1d6×5 feet).

Special: You can opt to continue the effect until the beginning of your next turn. Anyone in or entering the cylinder is affected. Because you are producing a continuous blast of air, the checked condition works normally while the wind lasts (checked creatures cannot move forward against the force of the wind. If airborne, they are blown backward 1d6×5 feet).

Munwithurix

Bloodthirsty, ill-humored, and rapacious, Munwithurix proves as treacherous and unforgiving as the fens she calls home. She has long since established herself as the most fearsome creature in the swamp; she has utterly cowed several gangs of scrags, who live in terror of her. They fear her claws, teeth, and especially her acidic breath weapon because it can counter their regeneration. Munwithurix has become increasingly dissatisfied with her position at the top of the local pecking order and now delights in the sparkle of gold, which does not tarnish even in the silty waters of her lair. She has also begun thinking about finding a mate.

Munwithurix: female young adult black dragon; CR 8; Large dragon (Water); HD 16d12+48, hp 152; Init +0; Spd 60 ft., swim 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 24 (touch 9, flat-footed 24); Atk +19 melee (2d6+4, bite), +17 melee (1d8+2, 2 claws), +17 melee (1d6+2, 2 wings), +17 melee (1d8+6, tail slap); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Breath weapon, *darkness,* frightful presence, rend, snatch; SQ Water breathing, immune to acid, DR 5/+1, SR 17, dragon traits; AL CE; SV Fort +13, Ref +10, Will +11; Str 19, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Munwithurix Power Up

Thanks to her *resistance* spell, Munwithurix's saving throw bonuses improve to: Fort +14, Ref +11, Will +12 against foes of good alignment; her *protection from good* spell makes Munwithurix's saving throw bonuses: Fort +15, Ref +12, Will +13; *protection from good* also gives her a +2 deflection bonus to Armor Class against attacks by good creatures: AC 26 (touch 11, flat-footed 26). The *protection from good* spell also prevents anyone from establishing mental control over her.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +6, Climb +17, Diplomacy +3, Hide +12, Intimidate +17, Listen +17, Move Silently +16, Search +17, Speak Language +16, Spot +17; Multiattack, Power Attack, Rend, Snatch, Wingover

Breath Weapon (Su): 80-foot line, 10d4 acid, Reflex save DC 22.

Darkness (Sp): Radius 50 feet, otherwise as the spell 3/day as a 5th-level caster.

Frightful Presence (Ex): 150-foot radius, HD 15 or less, Will save (DC 19) negates.

Rend (Ex): If the dragon strikes the same opponent with two claw attacks, it automatically inflicts an extra 2d8+6 points of damage.

Snatch (Ex): Grapple bonus +24; claw against creature of Diminutive size or smaller for 1d8+2/round, bite against Tiny or smaller creature for 2d6+4/round, or 4d6+8 if the dragon does not move; snatched creature can be flung 50 feet for 5d6 points of damage.

Water Breathing (Ex): The dragon can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use its breath weapon, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

Dragon Traits: Immune to sleep and paralysis effects, darkvision 500 feet, low-light vision, blindsight 150 feet.

Sorcerer Spells Known: (5/4; base DC = 11 + spell level): 0—*daze, detect magic, ray of frost, resistance;* 1st—*grease, protection from good.*

Tactics: Though she seldom meets foes small enough to be vulnerable to her snatch ability, Munwithurix has a taste for close combat; rending foes gives her great delight. Still, Munwithurix is no fool. She usually observes foes for a few minutes, either by hiding and watching them approach or by stalking them for a time. Despite her size, she proves adept at remaining unseen. She prefers to swim when shadowing prey, but she sometimes flies, skimming over the treetops. As she sizes up the opposition, she casts *protection from good,* followed by *resistance* just before attacking.

Once finished with her preparatory spells, Munwithurix rushes in and delivers her breath weapon. She usually selects an armored foe as the main target, along with any other foes she can catch in the effect, and she tries to be about 40 feet from the nearest enemy when breathing. After she breathes, Munwithurix casts *darkness* on a gem embedded in her belly, then closes with the foe. She worms her way into the group's center, where the *darkness* will cause the most disruption. Thereafter she directs her bite and claw attacks at a single target (usually the same unfortunate she selected for her breath weapon) and uses her wings and tail on anyone else within reach.

When dealing with prey in boats, Munwithurix sometimes casts several *grease* spells from hiding, making the boat and its paddles, oars, or rudder slippery.

Lair/Encounters: Munwithurix makes her lair under a dismal island in the fens. The whole place is surrounded by dense mats of floating vegetation, which make the place seem three times bigger than it is. Too thick to allow the passage of boats, the mats sag and flood when anyone walks on them, and one must wade several hundred yards from the lair before reaching solid ground. The lair's two entrances are both submerged, as is most of the lair. There is a central chamber, however, where sunlight penetrates through a hollow tree. Here Munwithurix keeps her hoarded gold, where it can gleam in the light.

Munwithurix has taken to dispatching groups of scrags to go collect gold for her. They infiltrate the rivers and streams surrounding the fens and waylay travelers. From time to time, Munwithurix accompanies these raiders, using the scrags as advance scouts. She is growing increasingly frustrated with the paltry amount of gold these forays have produced, and she has begun seeking out river pirates, dishonest merchants, and bandits in an effort to locate a really big cache of gold to raid. She uses a combination of intimidation and bribery to get the information she wants.

Upon meeting a group of PCs, Munwithurix might attack just for the fun of it, and if she gets the upper hand, she might attempt to force the group to sur-

render so she can hold part of the group for ransom. Should the group contain a creature small enough for her to snatch (such as a familiar), Munwithurix might snatch the creature and hold it for ransom. Instead of attacking, she might attempt to wheedle or extort information from the PCs, asking about towns they have visited, any wealth that might be found there, and any defenses. A clever party might be able to lure Munwithurix away from her lair to someplace where they can fight the dragon on their own terms.

Kallionastiryne

Kallionastiryne regards every inch of the forest where she dwells as her personal domain, and she likewise regards anyone who sets foot inside without her leave as a trespasser and vandal. Her uncompromising defense of her forest has won her the grudging admiration of a few druids; however, Kallionastiryne often allows orcs, giants, or other evil creatures hunting and logging rights, demanding hefty bribes of gold and gems and plenty of flattery as well. Kallionastiryne is not so much worried about the welfare of her forest as she is about being recognized as its sole owner. Because she regards these deals as little more than temporary agreements with inferior creatures, they seldom last long. Eventually, the dragon notes some lapse or weakness in her partners and kills them, claiming they have violated the agreement in some fashion.

Kallionastiryne: female adult green dragon; CR 12; Huge dragon (Air); HD 20d12+100, hp 230; Init +0; Spd 40 ft., swim 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 27 (touch 8, flat-footed 27); Atk +26 melee (2d8+8, bite), +21 melee (2d6+4, 2 claws), +21 melee (1d8+4, 2 wings), +21 melee (2d6+12, tail slap); Face/Reach 10 ft. x 20 ft./10 ft.; SA Breath weapon, crush, frightful presence, *suggestion*; SQ Dragon traits, immune to acid, water breathing, DR 5/+1, SR 21, dragon traits; AL LE; SV Fort +17, Ref +12, Will +15; Str 27, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +20, Concentration +18, Diplomacy +7, Hide -8, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (nature) +18, Listen +23, Move Silently +20, Search +23, Sense Motive +23, Spellcraft +23, Spot +23, Clinging Breath, Flyby Attack, Hover, Power Attack, Wingover, Wingstorm

Breath Weapon (Su): 50-foot cone, 12d6 acid, save DC 25.

Crush (Ex): Area 10 feet wide and 20 feet long; Small or smaller opponents suffer 2d8+12 points of bludgeoning damage and must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 23) or be pinned; grapple bonus +36.

Wingstorm (Ex): As a full-round action, creates a blast of air of windstorm strength in a cylinder with a 60-foot radius and up to 60 feet high. Creatures in the cylinder suffer wind effects. See Table 3–17 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information.

Frightful Presence (Ex): 180-foot radius, HD 19 or less, Will save (DC 21) negates.

Water Breathing (Ex): The dragon can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use its breath weapon, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

Dragon Traits: Immune to sleep and paralysis effects, darkvision 600 feet, low-light vision, blindsight 180 feet.

Sorcerer Spells Known: (6/7/5; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound, read magic, resistance;* 1st—*expeditious retreat, Nystul's undetectable aura, shield, true strike;* 2nd—*darkness, detect thoughts.*

Tactics: Kallionastiryne prefers nocturnal assaults, launching her well-planned attacks from the air. She usually has foreknowledge of an upcoming fight, and she prepares with *resistance, shield,* and *expeditious retreat.* When preparing for an attack, Kallionastiryne remains in the air and about 300 feet from her quarry while she casts her spells; then she flies in, staying about 30 feet above the ground and looses a clinging breath on as many foes as she can catch in the area. The following round, she hovers and creates a windstorm. In addition to the windstorm effects, the draft from her wings puts out open non-magical flames (such as torches and campfires) and creates a hemispherical cloud of leaves and twigs with a radius of 180 feet. Creatures in the cloud are blinded and remain blinded for 1 round after emerging from the cloud. Those caught in the cloud must succeed at a Concentration check (DC 20) to cast a spell.

On the round following the windstorm, Kallionastiryne makes a crush attack if any of her foes are still standing and small enough to be vulnerable to the attack. Otherwise she makes melee attacks against anyone left standing in the wake of the windstorm. When her foes begin to counterattack, Kallionastiryne uses her clinging breath weapon again (if possible), unleashes another windstorm, or defensively casts a *darkness* spell to obscure herself, as the situation warrants.

Lair/Encounters: Kallionastiryne's lair is a vast cave in a wooded hillside; however, she keeps the location secret. She has tribute delivered to a picturesque woodland glade containing a pool and a waterfall. Flooded caverns under the waterfall connect to a lake downstream. Kallionastiryne swims to the pool from the lake, giving the impression that her lair lies under the waterfall when it is in fact miles away.

Kallionastiryne often attacks adventurers who stray into her forest. She hopes to loot their remains and hoard whatever wealth she recovers. In such instances, characters might notice an ominous shape somewhere beyond the range of their vision, noticeable only by the way their view of the stars is blocked as the dragon circles their camp before it attacks.

It is equally likely that parties might encounter some of the dragon's

Kallionastiryne Power Up

The *resistance* spell grants Kallionastiryne a +1 resistance bonus to saving throws: Fort +18, Ref +13, Will +16 (don't forget her SR of 21). The *shield* spell grants a +7 cover bonus against foes on half the battlefield (the *shield* spell does not grant any saving throw bonuses, see the *Player's Handbook* errata file at www.wizards.com/dnd). Kallionastiryne usually orients the *shield* toward the greatest numbers, which sometimes is straight down when she's hovering. With the *shield* in effect, she has: AC 34 (touch 15, flat-footed 34). The *expeditious retreat* spell doubles Kallionastiryne's speed: 80 ft., swim 80 ft., fly 300 ft. (poor).

cronies as they cut a swath through the forest. Such creatures might flee the scene, seeking the dragon's aid. If a party captures one or more of them, they might offer to reveal the location of the dragon's "lair" in return for their freedom.

It is also possible that the party could meet good or neutral woodland creatures who are accustomed to living under the dragon's shadow and do their best to keep out of her way. Some of these creatures might warn a party of the danger the dragon poses, others might seek the party's aid in getting rid of her, possibly also by revealing the location of the "lair."

Dragon Mystic

While all dragons eventually master the arts arcane, some push the boundaries of learning even further. These rare individuals are known as dragon mystics, and even great wyrms speak of them in hushed tones.

Virtually all who take up this pursuit are true dragons (either chromatic or metallic). The occasional half-dragon who becomes a dragon mystic is generally a sorcerer or wizard, though a half-dragon bard could theoretically do so as well.

Dragon mystics lead lonely lives, generally lairing far from civilization in order to continue their studies in peace.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the dragon mystic prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Dragon mystics gain no additional proficiency in any weapon or armor.

Spells per Day: A dragon mystic continues training in magic as he gains levels. When a new dragon mystic level is gained, the character gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in an arcane spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class. The character does not gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. This essentially means that he adds the level of dragon mystic to the level of some other arcane spellcasting class the character has, then determines spells per day, spells known, and caster level accordingly.

If the character has natural spellcasting ability (such as that of a dragon), his effective level of spellcasting may instead increase by one. This increase is permanent and is added to the dragon's effective caster level as he ages.

Draconic Spell Power (Su): Whenever the dragon mystic casts a spell that inflicts damage, the spell inflicts an additional +1d6 damage per level to each target on a failed save. This damage is of the same type as the dragon's damaging breath weapon. If the dragon mystic has more than one breath weapon that inflicts damage, select one when this power is gained. If the dragon mystic has no breath weapon that inflicts damage, this power has no effect. It also has no effect on spells that don't inflict damage or that don't allow a saving throw.

Charisma Increase (Ex): At 2nd level, the dragon mystic gains a +1 bonus to his Charisma score, and he gains another +1 bonus at 4th level.

Draconic Spell Focus (Su): Whenever the dragon mystic casts an arcane spell from the Enchantment school or an arcane spell that inflicts the same type of energy damage as his damaging breath weapon (such as fire for a red dragon), add +2 (or one-half his age category, whichever is higher) to the DC of any saving throws made to resist it.

Metamagic Breath Weapon (Su): The dragon mystic can apply to his breath weapon the effect of one of the following metamagic feats that he knows: Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Maximize Spell, or Quicken Spell. Add the normal spell level adjustment to the 1d4 roll to determine when the dragon can breathe again. For example, a dragon mystic who enlarges his breath weapon would roll 1d4+1 to determine when he could breathe again, but would roll 1d4+4 to determine when he could breathe again if he had quickened his breath weapon. The dragon mystic can't apply the effects of a metamagic feat that he doesn't know. The dragon mystic may use this ability a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier or his age category (whichever is higher). If the dragon mystic has more than one breath weapon, the limit applies to total breaths (not separately to each breath weapon). If the dragon mystic has no breath weapon, this ability has no effect.

A note about age categories: For dragons without age categories, treat the dragon's age category as 1.

Dragon Mystic Requirements

To qualify to become a dragon mystic a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Creature Type: Dragon

Special: Ability to cast 3rd-level arcane spells.

Special: Must consume 5,000 gp value of diamonds

Dragon Mystic Class Skills

The dragon mystic's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

Str: –

Dex: –

Con: Concentration.

Int: Alchemy, Knowledge (any), Scry, Spellcraft.

Wis: Sense Motive.

Cha: Diplomacy, Intimidate, Use Magic Device.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Dragon Mystic Advancement

HIT DIE D12

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spellcasting
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Draconic spell power	+1 caster level
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Charisma increase	+1 caster level
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Draconic power harnessed	+1 caster level
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Charisma increase	+1 caster level
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Metamagic breath weapon	+1 caster level

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Worshipers OF THE Forbidden

Monster Cultist Prestige Classes

by Eric Cagle • illustrated by Jonathan Wayshak

A few monsters possess a certain magnetic quality. They are evil and sinister to such a degree that it is impossible to ignore their power. Despite this reputation (or perhaps because of it), some demented humanoids worship these monsters as superior beings, praying to the monsters' gods and doing whatever is asked of them. Through this worship, the cultist gains amazing powers, usually at the cost of their sanity and connection with their former lives. To venerate the gods of these monsters, with their completely alien mindset, is to tempt disaster and madness. These cultists begin taking on attributes of their masters, changing their bodies and gaining special powers. Over time, they become even closer to the monsters that they worship, turning into hideous monsters themselves.

SPHERE MINION

Among some humanoids and monstrous humanoids, insane individuals worship the terrible gods of the beholders. To these people, beholders are perfect beings that have reached the pinnacle of evolution. They look at their own bodies, with only two feeble eyes and flawed, crude limbs and are filled with disgust. By venerating the Great Mother of the beholders, they hope to receive her blessing.

The sphere minion is typically one of the many slaves that belong to a beholder community. Through constant brainwashing and exposure to beholders, they lose any sense of their former identity, making obedience to their masters the only goal worth pursuing. They are the masters and elite among the slaves, preaching the message of the Great Mother and the superiority of beholderkind. Beholders treat sphere minions slightly better than the other slaves, but they still look at them with disgust and disdain. The other slaves view them with awe and envy, for the sphere minion has been touched and changed by the Great Mother.

Wizards, sorcerers, and bards are most likely to become sphere minions, because they have an understanding of the arcane forces that beholders employ. Although they must devote a large percentage of their time learning arcane theory to be considered by the Great Mother, some clerics also make good sphere minions. Monks possess the right mindset, but fighters, rogues, and members of the other martial classes make poor candidates for the class.

Sphere minions are occasionally found outside the (relative) safety of the beholder warrens. They scout terrain in preparation for an assault by beholders. Sphere minions are also found in human cities, performing secret business for their masters. They cloak their appearance under thick hoods or use Illusion magic to remain hidden, revealing themselves only to other cultists or when they want to use their eye stalks to attack someone.

For Your Character

In most cases, the prestige classes presented here are to be used by the DM for enemies that the PCs might encounter during an adventure. They are usually the masterminds, or at least trusted lieutenants, of evil. However, a player character could take levels in one of these prestige classes, especially if the DM is running a game in which the players may play evil characters.

- Maybe your DM will allow you to play a monster cultist who does not know he worships a monster god. The god might be masquerading as a neutral or good god and allow creatures of those alignments to spread its worship.
- Evil gods often believe in "survival of the fittest" and occasionally pit two or more groups of their own religion against each other, weeding out the weak and granting power to the survivors. Perhaps one such group is neutral.
- Your DM might allow you to take monster cultist levels after your character is cursed or contracts a terrible disease.
- Perhaps after a vicious attack, your character becomes obsessed with the monster and "beating it at its own game."

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the sphere minion prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Sphere minions gain no new proficiency with any weapons, armor, or shields.

Eye Stalks (Su): As he gains experience, a sphere minion grows eye stalks. Unlike a beholder, the sphere minion can aim his eye stalks in any direction without problems. Using an eye stalk is a standard action. The sphere minion can use each eye stalk a number of times per day as described in the Sphere Minion Advancement table.

Each ray resembles a spell as though cast by a sorcerer of a level equal to 5 + the sphere minion's class level but follows the rules for a ray (see Aiming a Spell, page 148 in the *Player's Handbook*). Each has a range of 50 feet and a saving throw DC of 10 + sphere minion class level + Charisma modifier.

Eye Stalk I (Su): At 1st level, the sphere minion can choose one of the following abilities for the eye stalk:

Charm Person: The target must succeed at a Will save or be affected as though by the spell.

Inflict Light Wounds: This works just like the spell, causing 1d8+5 points of damage (Will half).

Sleep: This works like the spell, except that it affects one creature with a number of HD up to the character level of the sphere minion. The target must succeed at a Will save to resist.

Eye Stalk II (Su): At 3rd level, the sphere minion can choose one of the following abilities for his second eye stalk:

Fear: This works like the spell, except that it targets one creature. The target must succeed at a Will save or be affected as though by the spell.

Charm Monster: The target must succeed at a Will save or be affected as though by the spell.

Slow: This works like the spell, except that it affects one creature. The target must make a Will save to resist.

Eye Stalk III (Su): At 5th level, the sphere minion can choose one of the following abilities for his third eye stalk:

Flesh to Stone: The target must succeed at a Fortitude save or be affected as though by the spell.

Finger of Death: The target must suc-

For Your Campaign

Because the prestige classes presented here worship evil, dangerous monsters, they are often villains to be confronted. The cultists try to convert worshipers, enslave the unwary, and sabotage in the name of their masters. Uncovering a hidden cell of monster cultists can have a large impact on the game, with adventurers peeling away the conspiracies of the cultists like layers of an onion.

- Illithidkin are the first wave of an infestation of illithids. They spend a great deal of their time abducting innocent victims for their masters to consume.
- Wakers of the beast make the perfect apocalyptic cult that must be stopped before they unleash the unspeakable terror of the tarrasque.

Another variation is to remove the alignment and patron requirement of these prestige classes in order to make them destroyers of the monsters they emulate. These crusaders give up a great deal of their being to become more like their enemy.

- A group of wizards capture beholders in order to harness their intrinsic powers, turning unwitting pawns into "sphere slayers."
- Snake servants, being resistant to poison and immune to the petrifying gaze of medusas, could be steadfast destroyers of them, spearheading assaults on medusa strongholds.
- Wakers of the beast could suddenly realize the insanity of their mission, but still being driven by the impulse to find the tarrasque, might go there in order to stop others from awakening it.

Sphere Minion Advancement

Levels	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Eye stalk I 1/day
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	All-around vision
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Eye stalk II 1/day, eye stalk I 2/day
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Levitate
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Beholder apotheosis, eye stalk III 1/day, eye stalk II 2/day, eye stalk I 3/day

HIT DIE
D6

Sphere Minion Class Requirements

To qualify to become a sphere minion, a character must fulfill all the following *criteria*:

Race: Any humanoid or monstrous humanoid.

Alignment: Lawful evil.

Patron: The Great Mother.

Knowledge (Arcana): 8 ranks.

Spot: 4 ranks.

Feats: Alertness, Weapoz Focus (ray).

Sphere Minion Class Skills

The sphere minion's class skills (and the key abilities for each) are:

Str: –

Dex: –

Con: Concentration.

Int: Craft, Knowledge (arcana), Search.

Wis: Listen, Profession, Spot.

Cha: Bluff, Intimidate.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

ceed at a Fortitude save or be slain as though by the spell. The target suffers 2d6+6 points of damage if his saving throw succeeds.

Disintegrate: The target must succeed at a Fortitude save or be affected as though by the spell.

Telekinesis: The sphere minion can move objects or creatures, as per the spell. Creatures can resist with a successful Will save.

All-Around Vision (Ex): At 2nd level, the sphere minion grows accustomed to its eye stalk. This grants the sphere minion a +2 circumstance bonus to Spot and Search checks. In addition, the sphere minion cannot be flanked.

Levitate (Su): A sphere minion gains the ability to levitate—the better to serve his beholder masters. The sphere minion can levitate at will, as per the spell cast by a sorcerer of the sphere minion's class level.

Beholder Apotheosis: At 5th level, the sphere minion has lost all touch with his original heritage, becoming more like a beholder. Both of his normal eyes merge together into one huge, single eye in the middle of his forehead. His creature type permanently changes to "monstrous humanoid." All special abilities, spells, or effects treat him as a monstrous humanoid.

Ex-Sphere Minions: A sphere minion who ceases worshiping the Great Mother or willingly opposes a beholder loses almost all the class features of this prestige class. Any eye stalks that the former sphere minion has cease working and then fall off. He also loses the ability to levitate. The only class feature that is not lost is the beholder apotheosis. The creature is permanently warped and twisted into a monstrous humanoid, retaining the single, merged eye as a sign of his former allegiance to the beholder goddess.

ILLITHIDKIN

Mind flayers have a notorious reputation for being cruel and uncaring slavers of other races. The vast majority of these slaves live out the remainder of their short existence toiling away as servants, miners, or as entertainment for their mind flayer masters. Once they have exhausted their usefulness, the mind flayers devour the slaves' brains for food.

On rare occasions, however, the mind flayers spare certain slaves with the gift for psionics. These individuals are carefully dominated and monitored so that their gifts are not used against their masters, but they are allowed to expand and explore the talents they possess. Part of the brainwashing includes the worship of the mind flayers' god, Ilsensine. While few mind flayers give much credence to the worship of gods, they find that it is a perfect tool for creating utterly devoted servants.

These individuals are known as illithidkin. As they increase in power, illithidkin begin acquiring traits that are similar to their mind flayer masters. Over time, illithidkin begin hungering for the brains of living creatures, much like mind flayers.

Illithidkin come almost exclusively from the psion class. Psychic warriors are the next most common, although few mind flayers tolerate such a martial individual for too long. As long as they meet the required amount of psionic knowledge, any other class can be an illithidkin, with wizards, bards, and rogues being most common.

Illithidkin become the eyes and ears of mind flayers, infiltrating cities, armies, and organizations. They actively seek out other potential candidates for converting to the worship of Ilsensine. In addition, they kidnap people off the streets and from their homes to be used as food and slaves by mind flayers. Illithidkin are entrusted by their masters to lead units of other humanoids for these chores and are often the most powerful members of such groups.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the illithidkin prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The ilithidkin gains no new proficiency with weapons or armor.

Power Points: Illithidkin gain power points per day as shown on their advancement table. These power points are added to the character's previous total. Illithidkin gain bonus power points based on the key ability score for their primary ability. If the character previously could not gain bonus power points for high ability scores (as is the case for psychic warriors), she now chooses a primary discipline and can gain bonus power points based on the related ability score (see Table 1-2: Psion Bonus Power Points in the *Psionics Handbook*).

If the character did not previously have psion or psychic warrior levels, she gains power points and powers as shown in the advancement chart and gains the ability to use psionics and take psionic feats.

Powers Discovered: Illithidkin discover 0-level powers as shown on the Illithidkin Advancement table. The powers are added to the character's previous total powers known.

Psionic Combat Mode: The illithidkin learns a new psionic combat mode. She does not forget those that were previously learned.

Detached Mind (Su): The illithidkin becomes more emotionless, logical, and separated from troubling issues. The illithidkin gains a +2 bonus to sav-

Illithidkin Class Requirements

To qualify to become an illithidkin, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Race: Any humanoid or monstrous humanoid.

Alignment: Lawful evil.

Patron: Illsensine.

Concentration: 8 ranks.

Knowledge (Psionics): 8 ranks.

Special: A character wishing to take levels of the illithidkin prestige class must willingly consume the brain of a sentient creature.

Illithidkin Class Skills

The illithidkin's class skills (and the key abilities for each) are:

Str: Swim.

Dex: Hide, Move Silently.

Con: Concentration.

Int: Craft, Knowledge (psionics), Search.

Wis: Listen, Profession, Spot.

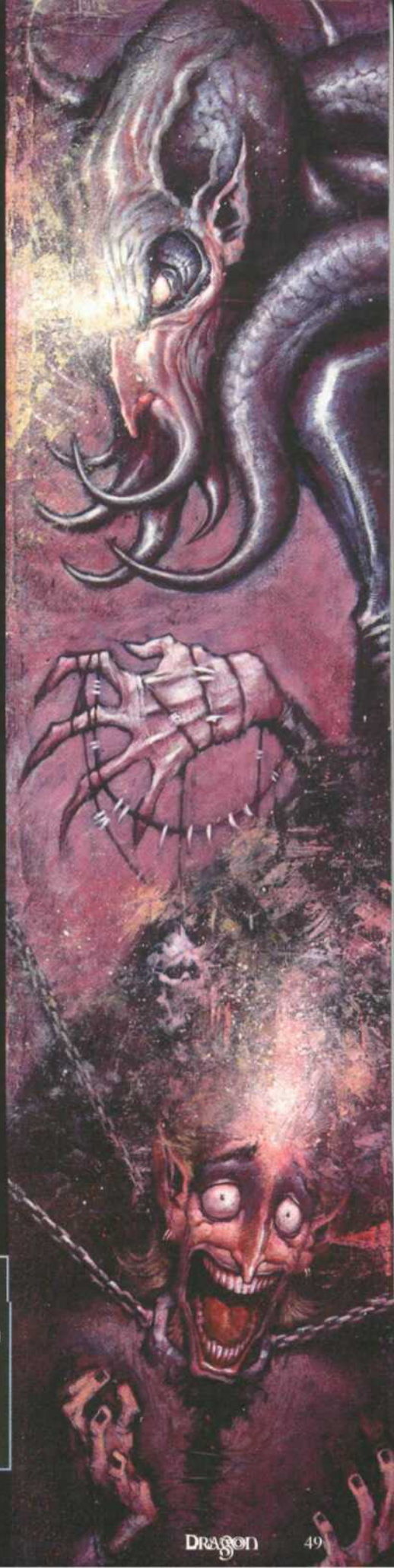
Cha: Bluff, Intimidate.

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

HIT DIE
D6

Illithidkin Advancement

Levels	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Power Points	Powers Discovered
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Detached mind, psionic combat mode	+3	—
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Telepathy 30 ft.	+5	—
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Psionic combat mode	+5	1
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Increased Intelligence	+5	1
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Illithid apotheosis, psionic combat mode	+7	2



ing throws against mind-affecting spells, spell-like abilities, psionic powers, and supernatural effects.

Telepathy (Su): Illithidkin can communicate mentally with any creature within 30 feet that has a language.

Increased Intelligence (Ex): At 4th level, the illithidkin's brain and skull begins to expand, increasing her Intelligence score by 2 points.

Illithid Apotheosis: At 5th level, the illithidkin has lost all touch with her original heritage, becoming more like a mind flayer. Her skin becomes purple and rubbery, and her eyes become completely white. Short, useless tentacles sprout from her face, and her teeth fuse into a beak-like maw. Her creature type permanently changes to "monstrous humanoid." All special abilities, spells, or effects treat her as a monstrous humanoid.

Ex-Illithidkin: An illithidkin who ceases worshiping the Illsensine or willingly opposes mind flayers loses almost all the class features of this prestige class. The only class feature that is not lost is illithid apotheosis. The creature is permanently warped and twisted into a monstrous humanoid, retaining the horrible mouth and tentacles.

Snake Servant Class Requirements

To qualify to become a snake servant, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Race: Any humanoid or monstrous humanoid.
Alignment: Lawful evil.
Patron: Shekenster.
Base Attack Bonus: +5.
Bluff: 5 ranks.
Disguise: 5 ranks.
Special: The potential snake servant must go through a special ceremony with a medusa, allowing her to poison him until his Strength score is brought completely down to 0.

Snake Servant Class Skills

The snake servant's class skills (and the key abilities for each) are:

Str: Climb.
Dex: Hide, Move Silently.
Con: –
Int: Craft.
Wis: Listen, Profession, Spot.
Cha: Bluff, Disguise, Intimidate.

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

HIT DIE
D8

SNAKE SERVANT

Snake servants are the chosen of various cults that revere medusas and their power. Unlike the other monster cultists presented here, snake servants are not as completely blind to their situation. Medusas demand servitude, but they hate obsequious behavior. As a result, snake servants must walk a fine line, following their master's commands, but doing so in a way that will not anger her.

Snake servants do most of the dirty work for a medusa, infiltrating organizations, scouting locations, and acting as the first line of defense against attack. Medusas that set up criminal rings use snake servants as proxies and middlemen, negotiating on their behalf and setting up jobs for other cultists. In a city with medusas running these rackets, snake servants are often the only "face" that is presented.

Snake servants are very active in setting up "churches" in big cities dedicated to the worship of Shekenster. They actively recruit impressionable, misguided, and deluded individuals into the cult, making them into pawns for the snake servant's use. Snake servants enjoy corrupting officials, nobles, and religious leaders, bringing them into the sight of Shekenster's never-ending gaze.

Rogues are the most likely candidates to be chosen as a snake servant, fol-

Snake Servant Advancement

Levels	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Medusa gaze immunity
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Poison damage reduction 1
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Stunning gaze (1/day)
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Poison damage reduction 2
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Petrification immunity, medusa apotheosis, stunning gaze (2/day)

If You Don't Have the Psionics Handbook

The requirements and class features listed for the Illithidkin assume that the player or DM has access to the *Psionics Handbook*. If you do not, you can make the following changes to the prestige class:

Prerequisites

Knowledge (Psionics): Not required.
Feats: Combat Casting, Iron Will.

Class Features

Ignore the power points, powers discovered, and psionic combat mode class features. Replace them with the following:

Detect Thoughts (Sp): At 1st level, an illithidkin may *detect thoughts* a number of times per day equal to her illithidkin class level + Intelligence modifier. This ability duplicates the spell of the same name as though cast by a wizard of the illithidkin's class level.

Suggestion (Sp): At 3rd level, the illithidkin can cast *suggestion* as a 7th-level wizard. The illithidkin may use this ability once per day.

Charm monster (Sp): At 5th level, the illithidkin can cast *charm monster* as a 7th-level wizard. The illithidkin may use this ability once per day.

lowed by clerics. Fighters, rangers, and monks who understand subtlety are also likely to take this class, followed by wizards and sorcerers. Classes with a chaotic bent, like barbarians and bards, are never found as snake servants.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the snake servant prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Snake servants are proficient with longbows, composite longbows, shortbows, composite shortbows, and all simple weapons, but they gain no new proficiency with armor or shields.

Medusa Gaze Immunity (Su): The snake servant becomes immune to the petrifying gaze attack of a medusa. The snake servant gains no immunity to any other sort of gaze attack.

Poison Damage Reduction (Ex): Through constant exposure to poisons of all types, especially those created by medusas, the snake servant can ignore a limited amount of poison damage. If the medusa cultist fails her Fortitude save against poison, she reduces the amount of poison damage by 1 point at 2nd level and 2 points at 4th level. This ability does not reduce any damage from the delivery method, just the poison itself. This reduction applies to both initial and secondary poison damage.

Stunning Gaze (Su): At 3rd level, the snake servant's gaze becomes particularly unnerving, causing creatures to be stunned. This effect has a range of 30 feet and is negated by a Fortitude save (DC 10 + snake servant class level + Charisma modifier). The snake servant can use this ability for 1 round a number of times per day as indicated on the Snake Servant Advancement table. A creature that fails its saving throw is stunned for 1 round.

Petrification Immunity (Su): Snake servants of 5th level are immune to all petrification effects.

Medusa Apotheosis: At 5th level, the snake servant has lost all touch with her original heritage, becoming more like a medusa. Her skin becomes scaly, and her eyes change into those of a reptile. Her eyelids wither away and are replaced by a nictitating membrane—her eyes never blink again. The snake servant's type changes to "monstrous humanoid." All special abilities, spells, or effects treat her as a monstrous humanoid.

Ex-Snake Servants: A snake servant who ceases worshiping Shekenster loses almost all class features of the prestige class. The only class feature that is not lost is the medusa apotheosis—the creature is permanently warped and twisted into a monstrous humanoid as a reminder of her former master. However, due to Shekenster's treacherous nature, a snake servant who remains faithful to the deity does not lose her abilities if she opposes medusas.

WAKER OF THE BEAST

Apocalypse. The world ablaze. A horrid monster stalking the land, crushing the unrighteous and cleansing the world of everything. This is the vision of the waker of the beast.

The "beast" is none other than the tarrasque, an immense creature that is virtually impossible to destroy. Every decade or so, the tarrasque awakens from a deep slumber, terrorizing the land and devouring anything that it encounters.

A waker of the beast is a humanoid who belongs to an apocalyptic cult that believes in the end of the world through the violence caused by the tarrasque. This cult sees the tarrasque as a method of cleansing the world of all living beings, bringing the world back to a pure state of being. However, although the tarrasque is truly a neutral being (being too stupid and hungry to care about complex things like right or wrong), the quest of the wakers of the beast make them evil and deluded beyond compare.

A person usually becomes a waker after receiving powerful visions of the tarrasque. During these nightmares, he can see the beast stalking the land, destroying everything in its path. However, he also becomes part of the tarrasque, feeling its power, its hunger, and its lust for destruction. When he awakens, the person either recoils with the horror of the nightmare or is . . . changed. From that moment on, he is drawn to the tarrasque, as a moth to flame, doing whatever he can to cause the beast to rise from its slumber. Most wakers hope to be devoured by their "god," seeing it as the ultimate sacrifice.

It is unclear how a waker gains his powers from such an uncaring (and un-divine) creature. Scholars suggest that the power that created the tarrasque in the first place can be tapped by anyone willing to relinquish their sanity and identity. As a waker grows in power, he also becomes more like the beast that he emulates, growing a thick carapace and bulking up with huge muscles. However, the alien mind of the tarrasque destroys the intellect, and the waker becomes more a creature of instinct and brutality than reason.

Only the truly insane and deluded would want to become a waker. Most wakers are clerics of evil gods who wish to bring about the end of the world by crushing it beneath the feet of the tarrasque. Beyond that, almost every other class is represented. Ex-paladins who have given in to evil and madness are also likely candidates to become a waker of the beast.

Waker of the Beast Class Requirements

To qualify to become a waker of the beast, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Race: Any humanoid or monstrous humanoid.

Alignment: Any evil.

Base Attack Bonus: +7.

Feats: Power Attack, Toughness.

Waker of the Beast Class Skills

The waker of the beast's class skills (and the key abilities for each) are:

Str: Climb.

Dex: –

Con: –

Int: Craft.

Wis: Listen, Spot, Wilderness Lore.

Cha: Intimidate.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

HIT DIE D12

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the waker of the beast prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A waker of the beast gains no new proficiency with any weapons, armor, or shields.

Natural Armor (Ex): At 1st level, a waker of the beast begins to grow a tough carapace that provides him with natural armor. This increases the waker's natural armor by +1 and increases it by an additional +1 at 3rd and 5th level.

Locate the Sleeper (Su): A 1st-level waker of the beast begins having visions about the tarrasque. These visions (or nightmares) take place only when the waker of the beast is asleep. Through these dreams, the waker of the beast learns the current location of the tarrasque. These visions also give the waker an understanding of how to awaken the slumbering tarrasque. Once a waker is within 1 mile of the location of the tarrasque, he can begin chanting to call the tarrasque from its sleep. The waker of the beast can try to awaken the tarrasque once per month, with a percent chance equal to his class level. Multiple wakers can attempt the chant together by joining hands, combining their class levels for the total percentage. Upon waking, the tarrasque begins its reign of terror on the landscape. The waker of the beast in no way controls the tarrasque.

Strength of the Beast (Su): At 2nd and 4th level, a waker of the beast begins turning into a terrible monster–increasing in strength, but losing intellect. The waker gets a permanent +2 increase to Strength and -2 decrease to Intelligence. This also results in the loss of skill points.

Claws and Bite (Ex): At 3rd level, the waker of the beast gains claw and bite attacks if he does not already have them. Use the values below or the waker's base claw and bite attacks, whichever are better.

Size	Bite Damage	Claw Damage
Small	1d4	1d3
Medium-size	1d6	1d4
Large	1d8	1d6

Tarrasque Apotheosis (Su): At 5th level, the waker of the beast's type permanently changes to "monstrous humanoid." All special abilities, spells, or effects treat him as a monstrous humanoid.

In addition, the waker of the beast grows larger by one size category, which affects many of its statistics. See "Size Increases" in the introduction of the *Monster Manual* for more information on the effects of increasing a size category. Note that this will change the waker's claw and bite damage. However, this final transformation decreases the waker of the beast's Intelligence by an additional -2.

Ex-Wakers: A waker of the beast who willingly and unnecessarily procrastinates going to awaken the tarrasque loses all class features except that the waker's Intelligence remains decreased and he retains the monstrous humanoid type.

Waker of the Beast Advancement

Levels	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Natural armor +1, locate the sleeper
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Strength of the beast
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Natural armor +2, claws and bite
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Strength of the beast
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Natural armor +3, tarrasque apotheosis

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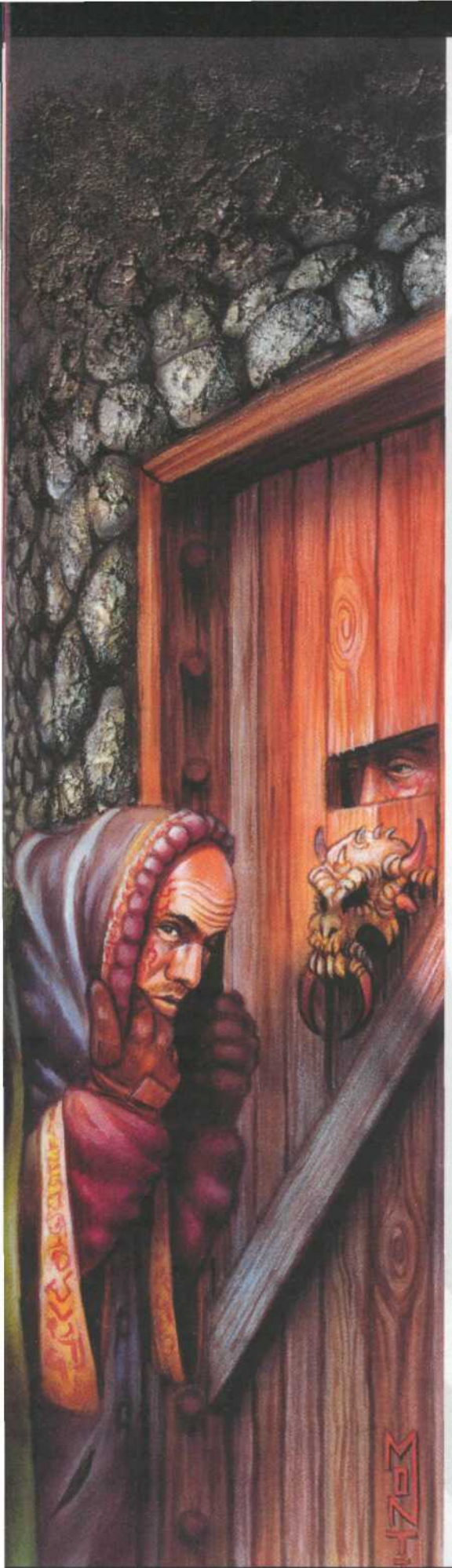


guild secrets

Using and Designing Guilds, Secret Societies, and Cults

by Andy Collins • illustrated by Monte Moore

This article lays out a framework to help you build organizations for your DUNGEONS & DRAGONS campaign. Using a system similar to the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*'s town generator, you can craft anything from a tiny boating partnership in the local village to a sprawling thieves' guild in your favorite metropolis, including the organization type and size, dominant alignment, resources available, leadership, racial demographics, and class and level makeup of the entire group.

Step 1: Type

If you haven't already decided on the type of organization you want to create, use Table 1: Organization Types to randomly generate this information.

Step 2: Alignment

The alignment of an organization need not match the dominant alignment of its community, although many do. If you haven't already selected your organization's alignment, roll randomly on Table 2: Organization Alignment. Most organizations tend to be lawful (the most stable of alignments). Some alignments might not match well with certain organization types (see Table 1: Organization Types for typical alignments), but that doesn't mean you can't creatively mix these two elements to form a unique organization.

Lawful Good: A lawful good organization strives to help others, but tempers its kindness with a devotion to the letter of the law and an attention to detail and policies. Many centers of learning are lawful good.

Neutral Good: These organizations seek to help those in need, with little regard toward influencing a community's power structure. Many charitable organizations are neutral good.

Chaotic Good: An organization of this alignment works tirelessly to protect people from tyranny. Chaotic good organizations are always trying to do the right thing, but a lack of communication and forethought often causes plans to fail or members of the group to work at cross-purposes.

Such a group might serve as anything from peaceful protesters to freedom fighters.

Lawful Neutral: Most lawful neutral organizations exist for their own purposes as much as for their members. They tend toward bureaucracy and codified regulations, and they stress the need for order above all else. Many trade guilds are lawful neutral.

True Neutral: Truly neutral organizations care little for the surrounding community, instead spending their time furthering their own goals. They tend to be the most welcoming of differing viewpoints. Many arcane guilds are true neutral, respecting each wizard's right to her own beliefs.

Chaotic Neutral: While most chaotic neutral organizations claim to fight for personal freedoms and against the encroachment of governmental power, many simply exist to fight for the sake of creating contention. Chaotic neutral organizations might be groups of vandals, anarchists, or revolutionaries.

Lawful Evil: A lawful evil organization uses the community's laws and regulations to their best benefit, furthering their goals at the expense of those less able to exploit such rules. Perhaps ironically, lawful evil organizations can (and do) exist quite well in otherwise lawful good societies, simply because they are willing to follow the laws (unless they can get away with breaking them). Expansionist or monopolistic trade guilds might be lawful evil.

Neutral Evil: A neutral evil organization looks out for the needs of its members above all else. Most thieves' guilds are neutral evil.

Chaotic Evil: Such an organization exists solely to help its individual members spread hatred, destruction, and mayhem. A murder cult is one example of a chaotic evil organization.

For Your Campaign

The guidelines presented in this article offer a strategy for quick generation of societies, guilds, and cults in your game. The society statistics block can also help you pare down and organize your notes about societies and organizations that already exist in your campaign. You can also get more mileage from this article by trying something new:

- Consider allowing your players to create their own organization of adventurers that all their PCs belong to. This gives them a personal stake in the campaign world you create and gives their PCs a good reason to adventure together.
- Use the organization generation process to generate the statistics for the town guard or militia. Just calculate it as a major organization, double the size of its membership, and presto—you have the city's police force.

Step 3: Size

Determine how large the organization is and where it is based. If you haven't already chosen a size based on your campaign needs, roll on Table 3: Organization Size. The size (Minor, Medium, or Major) will help you determine the organization's member population.

Step 4: Member Population

After determining the relative size of your organization, use the appropriate column on Table 4: Organization Membership by Town Size to determine the population of your organization. If you've already decided on the membership size and population, you can skip this step.

Step 5: Resources

Just like a community, every organization has a gold piece limit to its resources based on its size and population. The gold piece limit is an indicator of the maximum amount of money the organization can afford to spend in any given week, on any one item, or in pursuit of any given objective.

The gold piece limit noted in Table 4 is for a medium organization. A minor organization has a gold piece limit of one-half the indicated value, while a major organization has a gold piece limit of twice the indicated value.

Step 6: Demographics

To effectively use an organization in play, you must know the composition of the organization. The following guidelines allow you to determine the most common classes and races represented and the levels of the various members belonging to the group, from the leader down to the lowest-ranking associates.

For Your Character

Creating organizations for the campaign might seem like something for just your DM, but creating an organization can be a great way to generate a background for your character. Ask for approval from your DM, and then use this article to create an organization that gives your character extra interest:

- Perhaps your character belonged to an evil cult or secret society because your character's parents belonged to the organization. Now your character is on the run, having escaped the clutches of hereditary obligation but ever fearful that the family tradition will seek her out and drag her back.
- Your character might belong to a secret organization already, and because it's secret, you can add this history to a character you're already playing.
- If your DM allows you to create prestige classes for the campaign, she might allow you to create the organization that trains characters for that prestige class.

Class Demographics

The mix of classes represented in any given organization depends on whether that group is exclusive (limiting its membership to a single occupation), mixed (with a dominant class and a small representation of other classes), or integrated (including members from a wide variety of classes).

You should be able to decide on a primary class based on the type, alignment, and location of your organization. For instance, most trade-based organizations count experts as their primary class, while religious organizations number adepts, clerics, and other divine spellcasters in the majority. Most thieves' guilds are mixed, with the majority of their members being rogues but with a fair number of experts, warriors, fighters, bards, and other characters. A typical wizards' academy might be exclusive (limiting

Table 1: Organization Types

d%	Type of Organization	Typical Alignment*
01-40	**Trade (roll d% for subtype)**	–
01-45	Craft Guild	LG, LN, LE, NG, N, NE
46-90	Profession Guild	LG, LN, LE, NG, N, NE
91-00	Adventurers' Guild	Any
41-55	**Religious (roll d% for subtype)**	–
01-60	Holy Order	Any
61-80	Druidic Shrine	NG, LN, N, CN, NE
81-90	Fringe Cult	Any
91-00	Paladins' Order	LG
56-70	**Learning (roll d% for subtype)**	–
01-40	University	LG, LN, LE, NG, N, NE
41-55	Bardic College	LG, NG, CG, LN, N, CN
56-75	Monastery	LG, LN, LE
76-85	Spy Network	Any
86-00	League of Explorers	LG, NG, CG, LN, N, CN
71-80	**Magical (roll d% for subtype)**	–
01-50	Wizards' College	NG, LN, N, CN, NE
51-70	Alchemists' Conclave	NG, LN, N, CN, NE
70-90	Arcanists' Academy	NG, LN, N, CN, NE
91-00	Guild of Sorcery	NG, LN, N, CN, NE
81-90	**Criminal (roll d% for subtype)**	–
01-30	Thieves' Guild	N, CN, LE, NE, CE
31-40	Assassins' Guild	LE, NE, CE
41-50	Beggars' Guild	N, CN, LE, NE, CE
51-70	Street Gang	N, CN, NE, CE
71-80	Crime Syndicate	LN, N, CN, LE, NE, CE
81-90	Smugglers' Cartel	Any
91-95	Anarchist Band	CG, CN, CE
96-00	Freedom Fighters	CG, CN, CE
91-95	**Roll twice and combine the results**	–
96-00	**Other (DM's option)**	Any

*See the Organization Alignment section and Table 2 for more details and options.

Table 2: Organization Alignment

d%	Organization Alignment
01-25	Same as community's primary power center
26-30	Opposite of community's primary power center*
31-45	Lawful good
46-55	Neutral good
56-60	Chaotic good
61-73	Lawful neutral
74-80	True neutral
81-83	Chaotic neutral
84-93	Lawful evil
94-98	Neutral evil
99-00	Chaotic evil

*If the community's primary power center is true neutral, roll again.

its membership to pure wizards) or mixed (with sorcerers and other arcane casters joining the assemblage). An adventurer's guild is likely to be highly integrated, with members of all walks of life. Don't forget to include one or more NPC classes in your demographics, particularly warriors and experts.

Highest-Level Members

Use Table 6 and Table 7 to determine the highest-level character in the primary class of your organization. Roll the dice indicated for the class that you have determined is primary, and apply the modifier based on the size of the community found in Table 9.

For secondary and following classes, use Table 8 to determine the highest-level character based on the town size. For instance, in a small city, the highest-level character of the organization's secondary class will be one-half the result derived from Table 6 or 7, while the highest-level character of the organization's tertiary classes will be one-fourth the normal result. Characters of other classes will be 1st level.

In larger communities, there is a chance that the highest-level character in the secondary class will use the normal result from Table 6 or 7, and a chance that the highest-level character in the tertiary class will be determined just as for the secondary class. The highest-level character in all other classes will be half the result derived for the tertiary class (which might be one-fourth, one-half, or even equal to the result derived from Table 6 or 7). Round fractional results down, but treat any result of less than 1st level as 1st level.

Note that in any organization, there is a 5% chance that a single member who doesn't belong to the organization's primary, secondary, or tertiary classes will have a level equal to (or maybe even higher than) the highest-level character in your organization's primary class. This character might represent a "wild card" in the organization, a unique member, or might simply be a fish out of water.

Total Characters of Each Class

Use the following method to determine the levels of all the characters in an organization of any given class.

If the highest-level character of a given class indicated is 4th level or above, assume there is one additional character of that class of half that level. If this results in a character who is 4th level or higher, assume that there are two characters of half that character's level. Continue until the number of 2nd- or 3rd-level characters is generated—do not generate 1st-level members in this manner.

After you have determined the number of 2nd- and 3rd-level characters of each class, divide the remaining population so that it matches the class demographics of the organization. For instance, if 37% of an organization are rogues, then 37% of the leftover membership are 1st-level rogues. Repeat for each class present in the organization.

You can also round out any organi-

zation with a few characters of classes not represented in the organization's typical mix. For instance, even if your thieves' guild doesn't have a listing for wizards, you can still add one to the membership. Don't forget to include multiclassed or prestige-classed characters as appropriate.

Note that your final membership numbers—particularly the 1st-level characters of PC classes—might not match up well with the expected quantity of that class in the community (as per Chapter 4 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). Don't worry too much about this—ultimately, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*'s method of determining the number of characters with PC class levels might be too conservative for your campaign, particularly if you have many cities and metropolises (which are likely to have large, powerful organizations). If you need a rationalization, consider the possibility that the organization has drawn a great number of members from outlying towns and villages. Also, remember that many low-level characters might belong to more than one organization!

Leader of Organization

The leader of an organization is usually the highest-level character of the primary class. Roll on Table 10: Organization Leader or select an appropriate character to lead the group.

Racial Demographics

Most organizations mirror the local racial mix, though exceptions are not uncommon. Use Table 11: Racial Demographics or select an appropriate racial mix for your organization.

Table 3: Organization Size

d%	Organization Size
01-40	Minor*
41-90	Medium**
91-00	Major

*Minor organizations don't exist in thorps or hamlets.
**Medium organizations don't exist in thorps.

Step 7: Flesh Out the Details

At this point, all that's left is to breathe life into the framework you've created. Provide the organization with a name, turn your NPCs into full-fledged characters (with personalities and backgrounds as appropriate), and link the organization to your campaign history.

Now's the time to determine other crucial details about the group you've created. Is it a secretive organization whose existence is known only to its members? Even a craft guild might pride itself on secrecy and mystery. How hard or easy is it to join the group? What kind of insignias, code words, pass-phrases, or secret handshakes does the group use? Does the group enjoy support (whether public or private) from local authorities, or is it a renegade assembly? Is the organization well-respected by the populace, or are its members social pariahs?

These and other unique facets are what will turn your organization from a boring collection of numbers into a full-fledged part of your campaign.

Step 8: Finish the Stat Block

Once you've designed your society, you can use this example to create a society statistics block for your group:

Name (size): AL [alignment abbreviation]; # gp resource limit; Membership # [Racial mix: Isolated, Mixed, or Integrated] [(race #, race #, race #, race #, race #, race #, and so on).] *Note: The number following each race name is a percentage of the entire membership, not the exact number of individuals of that race.

Authority Figure(s): [Name, gender, race, class, and level.]

Important Characters: [Name, gender, race, class, and level (title or position); Name, gender, race, class, and level (title or position); Name, gender, race, class, and level (title or position).]

Others: [Class mix: Exclusive, Mixed, or Integrated]; [class and level (#), class and level (#), and so on] *Note: The numbers in this entry are the exact numbers of residents of each class.

Notes: Place any special notes about the organization here.

Example Organization: The League of Scrolls

The League of Scrolls is a semi-secretive order of sages, librarians, talespinners, and loremasters. Based in the metropolis of Blackmere City, this loose network is dedicated to the gathering and protecting of knowledge and learning of all kinds, regardless of its origin or application. The members, commonly called Scrollkeepers, are as likely to prize a necromancer's journal or history of draconic lore as a tome of holy scripture or a ragged account of a centuries-old climate anomaly.

Some say the League has lost sight of the value of knowledge (that is, its applicability in the world). If she deigned to reply to such critics, a Scrollkeeper might ask how anyone

Table 4: Membership by Town Size

Town Size	Town Population	Organization Minor	Organization Medium	Population* Major	GP Limit**
Thorp	20-80	n/a	n/a	1-2	20 gp
Hamlet	81-400	n/a	1-2	3-5	50 gp
Village	401-900	1-2	3-5	6-10	100 gp
Small town	901-2,000	3-5	6-10	11-25	400 gp
Large town	2,001-5,000	6-10	11-25	26-60	1,500 gp
Small city	5,001-12,000	11-25	26-60	61-125	7,500 gp
Large city	12,001-25,000	26-60	61-125	126-250	20,000 gp
Metropolis	25,001+	61-125	126-250	251+	50,000 gp

*These numbers can be used to represent how many members can be found in a given community; they need not represent the total number of members the organization has.
**Halve the listed value for minor organizations, and double it for major organizations.

Table 5: Class Mix

Exclusive
96% primary class
2% secondary class
1% tertiary class
1% other classes
Mixed
79% primary class
9% secondary class
5% tertiary class
3% tertiary class
2% tertiary class
2% other classes
Integrated
37% primary class
20% secondary class
18% tertiary class
10% tertiary class
7% tertiary class
5% tertiary class
3% other classes

Table 6: Highest-Level Members (PC Classes)

PC Class	Character Level (Primary Class)
Barbarian	1d4 + community modifier
Bard	1d6 + community modifier
Cleric	1d6 + community modifier
Druid	1d6 + community modifier
Fighter	1d8 + community modifier
Monk	1d4 + community modifier
Paladin	1d3 + community modifier
Ranger	1d3 + community modifier
Rogue	1d8 + community modifier
Sorcerer	1d4 + community modifier
Wizard	1d4 + community modifier

Table 7: Highest-Level Members (NPC Classes)

NPC Class	Character Level (Primary Class)
Adept	1d6 + community modifier
Aristocrat	1d4 + community modifier
Commoner	4d4 + community modifier
Expert	3d4 + community modifier
Warrior	2d4 + community modifier

can know what value a piece of knowledge might have in ten generations. Better safe than sorry, or so the League believes.

League of Scrolls (minor): AL NG; 25,000 gp resource limit; Membership 70; Integrated (human 37, dwarf 20, halfling 18, elf 10, half-elf 7, gnome 5, half-orc 3).

Authority Figures: Megali Nomikos, female human Wiz10/Lor6.

Important Characters: Beckert, male dwarf Exp10 (sage); Alasdair Greene, male half-elf Brd15; Sahure, male human Mnk13; Niculescu, male halfling Wiz7/Lor1; Ana the Half-Wit, female halfling Brd7 (court jester); Corrina Attis, female human Clr4 of Boccob; Helmut Rieger, male dwarf Clr2 of Moradin; Bouchard, male elf Rog4; Mancinus Sarcula, male half-elf Ari3; Delia Sarcula, female human Ari1; Aria Sarcula, female half-elf Ari1.

Others: Mixed; Wiz4 (2), Wiz2 (4), Wiz1 (18), Exp5, Exp2 (2), Exp1 (10), Brd3 (2), Brd1 (9), Clr1 (5), Rog2, Rog1 (3).

Notes: League members gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Knowledge and Gather Information checks when they have access to League resources.

Table 8: Highest-Level Character by Town Size

Secondary Class
Up to Small City
Divide Table 6 or 7 result by 2
Large City
01–75: Divide Table 6 or 7 result by 2
76–00: Use Table 6 or 7 result
Metropolis
01–50: Divide Table 6 or 7 result by 2
51–00: Use Table 6 or 7 result

Tertiary Class
Up to Small City
Divide Table 6 or 7 result by 4
Large City
01–75: As Secondary, but divide by 2
76–00: Same as Secondary
Metropolis
01–50: As Secondary, but divide by 2
51–00: Same as Secondary

Other* Class
Up to Small City
Level 1
Large City
As tertiary, but divide by 2
Metropolis
As tertiary, but divide by 2

*There is a 5% chance that a single member of a miscellaneous class is calculated as if that character is the highest-level character in the primary class.

Organization Size and Resources

The loosely structured League of Scrolls has members scattered through many towns and cities across the continent. It numbers a mere 70 members in Blackmere City—its largest concentration anywhere—qualifying it as a minor organization.

The League has typical resources for its size and location, thanks to good connections between its members and the wealthy and powerful of the city. The organization has a 25,000 gp limit on purchases or endeavors.

Organization Alignment and Leadership

In general, the League holds itself above local politics and prefers to stay aloof of conflicts between good and evil. Despite their loose structure, the League of Scrolls tends a bit toward bureaucracy (particularly in Blackmere City), and thus their overall alignment is lawful neutral. However, they welcome members of any alignment or background, as long as that member is willing to abide by the League's policies and contribute toward its stores of knowledge.

The League of Scrolls prides itself on not relying on central leadership for its direction. However, in such situations as might arise when a ranking arbiter is needed to resolve a conflict, most members would turn to the organization's leader, Megali Nomikos, or a proxy appointed by her.

Organization Membership and Demographics

The League's open membership policies make it a more integrated organization than the community at large. Just over one-third (37%, to be precise) of the membership of the League of Scrolls is human, with 20% dwarf, 18% halfling, 10% elf, 7% half-elf, 5% gnome, and 3% half-orc. This integrated membership is common in other cities where

the League has a presence, though such groups are typically very small (sometimes as few as a single individual).

As with racial demographics, the class makeup of the League of Scrolls is well integrated, including members from many walks of life.

Wizards make up a plurality of the League's membership, with 37%. As noted above, the League looks to Megali Nomikos (female human, Wiz10/Lor6) for leadership when needed. Other wizards in the organization include Niculescu (male halfling, Wiz7/Lor1), two 4th-level wizards, four 2nd-level wizards, and 18 1st-level wizards.

Twenty percent of the Scrollkeepers are experts (including sages, scribes, bookbinders, librarians, and a smattering of merchants), and among those, Beckert the sage (male dwarf, Exp10) is known across the city as perhaps the most learned individual in the region, commanding great respect from the other Scrollkeepers. The organization also has one 5th-level expert, two 2nd-level experts, and 10 1st-level experts.

Bards comprise 18% of the Scrollkeepers, and Megali's chief rival for leadership among the League is Alasdair Greene (male half-elf, Brd15), whose wry demeanor makes him popular among the younger members of the group. Ana the Half-Wit (female halfling, Brd7) poses as a fool in the king's court. Other bards in the organization include two 3rd-level bards and nine 1st-level bards.

The Scrollkeepers number a few clerics (10%) among their membership, though none are of very significant status in the local clergy. Corrina Attis (female human, Clr4) is a minor functionary of the temple of Boccob, while Helmut Rieger (male dwarf, Clr2) oversees evening ceremonies in the temple of Moradin. Five 1st-level clerics of various faiths round out the rest of this group.

When the League's activities call for discretion, they turn to Bouchard (male elf, Rog4) and his team of retrieval experts, which makes up 7% of the group's membership and includes a 2nd-level rogue and three 1st-level rogues.

The group has a few contacts in high places (5%), including Mancinus Sarcula (male half-elf, Ari3), his wife Delia (female human, Ari1), and their grown daughter Aria (female half-elf, Ari1).

The last member of the League of Scrolls in Blackmere City is a mysterious newcomer to the city. Hailing from the Monastery of Light high in the Shard Mountains, Sahure (male human, Mnk13) professes an abiding desire for gathering and protecting knowledge of all kinds. Megali doesn't fully trust him, though, wondering if his presence in Blackmere City is the precursor to a power struggle between the League of Scrolls and the Monastery.

Joining the League of Scrolls

Characters who wish to join the League of Scrolls must demonstrate their devotion to gaining and protecting knowledge—not just for their own purposes, but for the selfless goal of maintaining such treasures for the future. Wizards must open their spellbooks to other Scrollkeepers, and characters of all types must vow never to keep secrets from other members. Any member caught hoarding knowledge without the League's consent faces censure or even expulsion.

In return, such characters have access to the League's storehouse of information and network of contacts. This is reflected in a +2 circumstance bonus to all Knowledge and Gather Information checks made while the character is in a position to use the League's resources. Wizards can readily learn any commonly known spell by using contacts within the League.

Table 9: Community Modifiers

Community Size	Community Modifier
Thorp	-3*
Hamlet	-2*
Village	-1
Small town	0
Large town	+3
Small city	+6
Large city	+9
Metropolis	+12

*A thorp or a hamlet has a 5% chance to add +10 to the modifier of a ranger or druid level.

In the Campaign

The League of Scrolls represents a powerful tool for the DM to use in kicking off adventures. Perhaps Beckert needs the PCs to deliver a tome of knowledge to an associate, sending them on a cross-country trek through the wilderness. Or maybe Ana overhears disaffected courtiers discussing a plot to assassinate a local noble. Megali could even entrust the characters with a quest to discover a lost wizard's library deep in the desert or high in the mountains.

Alternatively, the League could become a secretive organization, preferring to use their stores of knowledge to influence events behind the scenes. In this case, the Scrollkeepers might become the foes of the PCs—perhaps without the characters even suspecting the group's existence!

Table 10: Organization Leader

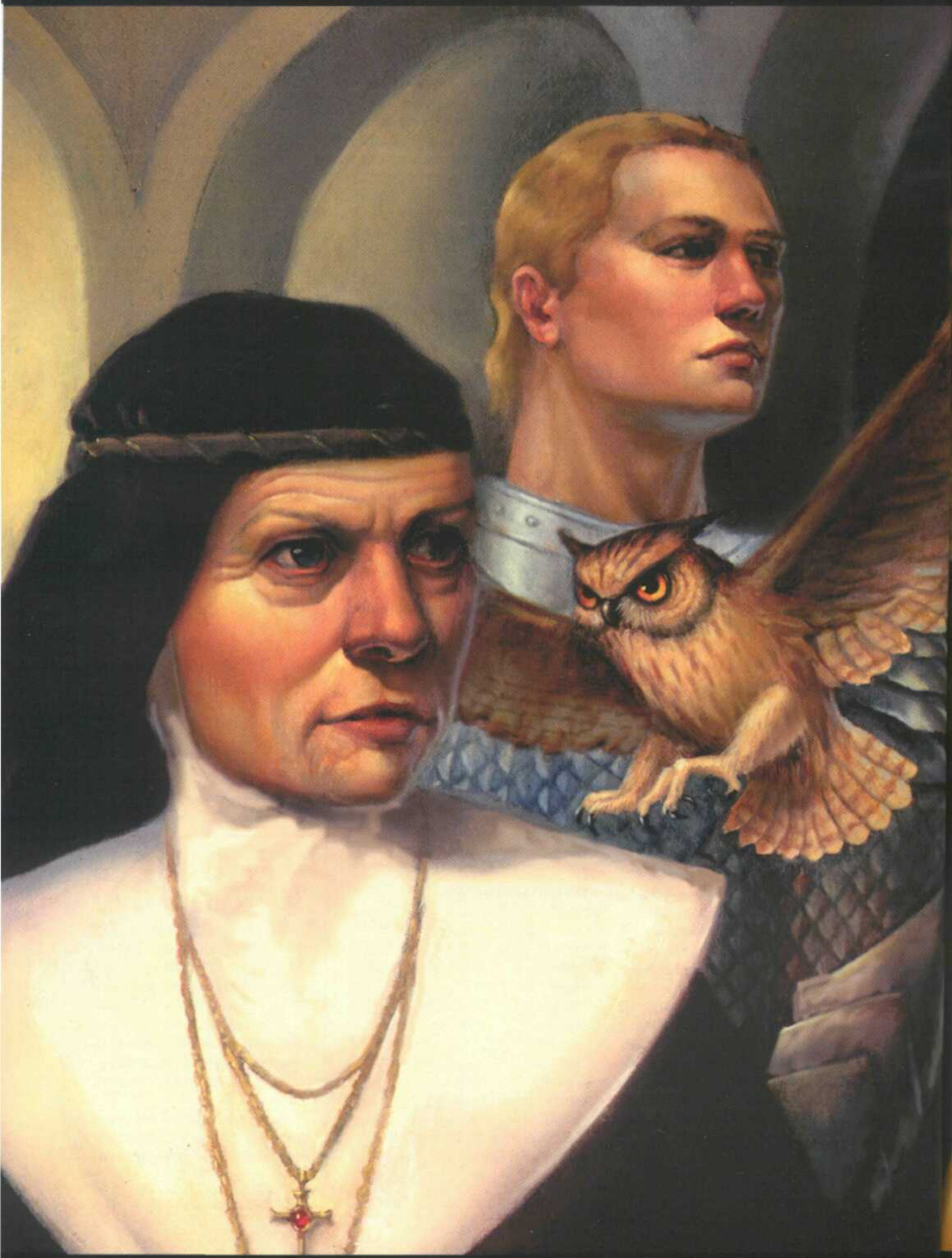
d%	Leader
01-70	Highest-level character of primary class
71-85	Second highest-level character of primary class
86-95	Highest-level character (regardless of class)
96-00	Other (DM's choice)

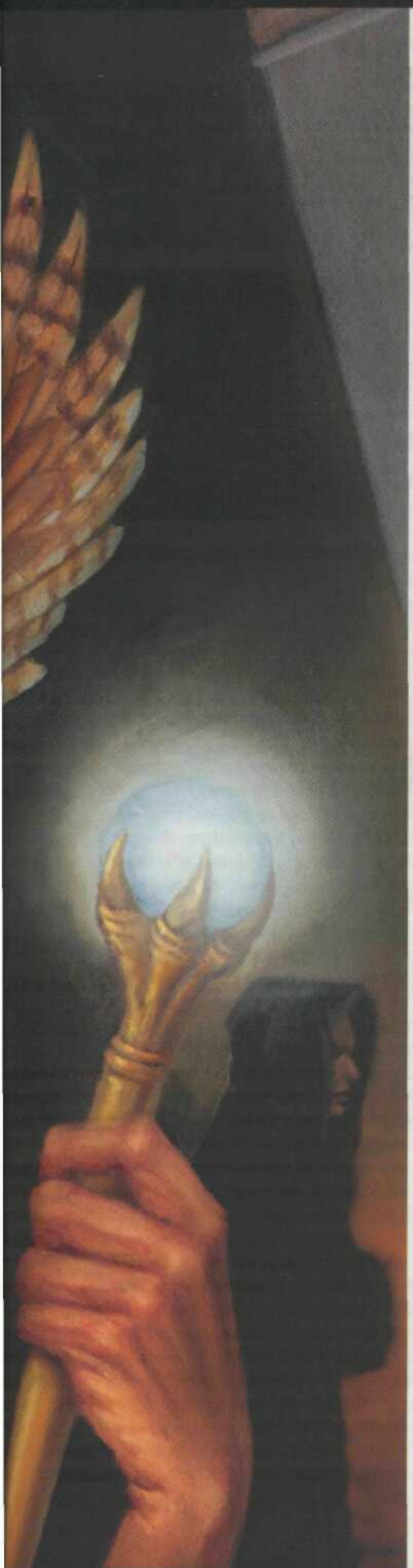
Table 11: Racial Demographics

d%	Demographics
01-60	Same as community
61-90	More isolated than community*
91-00	More integrated than community**

*Use the racial mix one step toward isolated. If the community already uses the isolated racial mix, treat as isolated.

**Use the racial mix one step toward integrated. If the community already uses the integrated racial mix, treat as integrated.





THE TOMB

by Thomas Harlan • illustrated by Lori Koefoed

Jerusalem, Late Spring, 1114 AD

Thick, scented smoke curled up through a roof of crossed beams. The ancient wood was dark with soot and charred by fire, yet the dome above had survived centuries of neglect. Harold Godwinson knelt before a small marble altar, broad mail-clad shoulders glowing in a shaft of early morning sunlight. The dome was pierced by a round opening, allowing the rising sun to shine down upon the very tomb where Christ had risen from the dead. The last penitents and priests from mass had departed, leaving the church of the Holy Sepulcher almost deserted. Only the Saxon remained, head bent, eyes closed, forehead pressed against the crossbar of his sword. His lips moved in a constant litany of prayer.

Horrid memories lit by a dreadful azure light assailed his mind. Only resolute concentration upon the glory of the Lord kept them from overwhelming his thoughts and plunging him into black despair. *Sic lumen tuum meae largiaris, rogo, Iesu mi, lucernae, ut illius luce. . . .*

An unexpected low hooting broke the morning stillness, and Harold looked up in surprise. A tiny gray and white owl drifted over his head, flitting in and out of the sunlight. The Saxon rose up, regarding the owl with wary blue eyes.

"You should be abed," he said, wondering what had driven the nocturnal creature from its nest. The owl looped soundlessly between the pillars. "I've no mice here—nor do the priests, I expect."

Only the Saxon remained, head bent, eyes closed, forehead pressed against the crossbar of his sword.

A figure leaning on a walking stick emerged from the dimness. Harold caught a glimpse of dark, narrowed eyes, a silver chain, and black-on-black clothing. *A nun?*

"Athenê! I've no time for your . . ." The woman was ancient—face weathered and seamed, her hair a tightly bound mane of white—though she moved swiftly, without any sign of aching joints or weary feet. She stopped, suddenly aware of the knight towering above her, fair hair gleaming in the sunlight, mailed hauberk, belt, and blade nearly hidden under the dusty tan of a desert cloak. "So—giants are loose in the temple!"

The woman's bright, knowing eyes squinted, and Harold felt a shiver as she took him in with a swift, precise glance. Her gaze lingered on his face and thin, bloodless lips pursed in consideration.

Georganta screamed for a long time, he thought sadly. Even when his body was ash, I still heard him screaming.

"You're a Saxon," she said in a sharp, prodding voice. "A belted knight. Are you sworn to service? Have your spurs?"

"I do," Harold said, fighting an urge to step back. "From King Baldwin's hand."

"Hmm." The woman glanced around, pleased no one else was in the chapel. She raised a hand—thin, wiry, her wrist circled with bracelets and knotted strings—and the owl ghosted down to light on her fist. "Flighty bird. . . . Young man, you wear the cloak of a Nabatean prince. Where did you get something so fine?"

Harold did not answer immediately, his attention fixed on Athené, who walked up the woman's arm on tiny clawed feet and into her hood. Entirely at ease, the tiny creature disappeared into the folds of black cloth. He almost grinned, but the woman's question leached all amusement from his expression. "From our foe," he said; the sharp image of a ruined face shouting in hate across the blur of steel standing clear in his memory. "Fairly won, if you must know."

"You've a name?" The old woman seemed to find great interest in the designs hemming the cloak. "I am Theodora."

"Harold," the Saxon knight replied, finally grasping the woman's accent, attitude, and profile. "You're Greek? From a convent here in the Holy Land?"

"You would call me so, yes." Theodora seemed pleased by his response. "Tell me, young sir, do you hold any love for those of Norman blood?"

"No!" Harold blurted before he could restrain himself. "That is . . ." he said, trying to temper a dangerous response. King Baldwin was French. "I have had unpleasant dealings with some Norman knights, in past time."

Theodora ignored his strained voice, leaning on her staff and watching him in a weighing, calculating way. Harold felt mildly insulted, as though he were being measured for the butcher's block or trotted around a stock-ring.

"I came," Theodora said, making a sharp, circumscribed gesture, "seeking assistance. My countrymen often pay homage here. But you . . . you are a burly fellow, and I spy a blade of quality at your side. You know its use, I trust? Do you have a horse?"

"Yes." Harold's hand closed over Wurmbiter's bronze pommel. The sword was old, a gift from his grandfather and keen beyond the skill of any mortal smith. A spirited Arabian was stabled near the Mount Zion gate. "What do you want of me?

"The day flees while we talk," Theodora said, turning away and striding quickly across the marble-tiled floor. She glanced over her shoulder, dark eyes glinting out of the shadows. "But you would do your king good service by accompanying me—and put paid to the schemes of Norman lords who have no love for Baldwin of Boulogne."

"I have heard such things said before," Harold said. He did not move to follow her. The remembered smell of splintered, burning rock filled his nostrils. *Georganta screamed for a long time,* he thought sadly. *Even when his body was ash, I still heard him screaming.* "Tell me what you know—the whole of the matter—and I will judge."

"You will judge?" The woman's white eyebrows rose in amusement. Her walking stick rapped sharply on the floor. "A Saxon knight barely out of swaddling cloth deigns to think before acting? What strange blood flows in your English veins to force honor from a steady heart? Would you let these conspirators act unchecked?"

Harold's lips settled into a tight slash on a grim, drawn face. Seeing the change come over him, Theodora became concerned. The Saxon's touch had not strayed from his sword and now his scarred fingers were firm upon a wire-wrapped hilt. "My year in the Holy Land has taught me caution at cost, old mother. The very air is treacherous, the land untrustworthy. Now if you'd have my help, tell me what drives you to such haste."

The nun squinted, searching his bluff, open-seeming face, and found deep lines of grief and loss etched around desolate blue eyes. Her gaze lingered upon glassy scars barely visible at his stout wrists. "Your pardon, Sir Harold. I meant no disrespect. You seemed younger at first glance."

She led him away from the altar and out into a paved courtyard filled with scaffolding, for the king had lately decreed the tumbled-down sanctuary should be rebuilt to reflect the glory of God and the Church of Rome. *Out with this Greek trash and a proper cathedral in its stead!* Already the air shimmered with the day's heat, and peddlers plagued them with unceasing cries. The courtyard was filled with all matter of reliquaries, artifacts, and icons.

"Relics! Sacred relics!" The touts brayed. "Saint's shinbones, splinters of the Cross, blood of the martyrs!" Harold tried to ignore them, though they plucked at his sleeve, offering arrowheads dug from the body of St. Sebastian for only a handful of silver.

"I rise early," the old woman said, making her way east through a crowd, "for I've no patience for time-wasting ritual at Prime. I was sitting to break my fast in the refectory of the Syrians—they have a fine porridge, thick with almonds, dates, and honey, and most have thankfully taken a vow of silence—when I overheard two of the cooks discussing a certain matter.

"They said a group of foreign knights, new come to the Holy Land, had fallen into conversation with one of the priests. These foreigners wished to reach the 'shrine of the patriarchs' in Hebron and took on the holy father as a guide."

"Pilgrims." Harold kept his voice low as they pushed through a jostling mob near the money exchangers. Shouts and pleas filled the air, making a rattling clamor. In such a crowded place, with the noise of the city beating the air like a drum, one could easily forget most of Holy Jerusalem was still

abandoned, smoke-blackened ruins. The King had offered many incentives to draw Christians from all lands to fill the city, though save for the ubiquitous Syrians, few had yet dared the long, dangerous journey from the west. "Dozens of such men enter the city each day, hoping to find grace amongst the holy graves."

Theodora did not pause, turning south toward the vegetable market, but her eyes slid to the Saxon's face, then away again. The knight's voice was flat and cold, which seemed contrary to his nature.

"Too," she said, "I learned these men intend to seize the tomb 'for Christ,' by which I venture they mean to take control of the holy place themselves or perhaps for Bishop Diambert's thrice-cursed Roman Church."

"This troubles you?" Harold bent his head as they passed through an archway. "Do your Greek clergy control this shrine?"

"No." Theodora stepped into the doorway of a shop crowded with copper plates and cups. She peered around, trying to see which street they had come upon. "This is a more complicated matter."

The old woman found the waypost she desired, and they plunged out into the torrent of humanity clogging Temple Street with the smells, sights, and sounds of both East and West. Beyond the commotion, an unusually straight alley led south, overhung on both sides by three- and four-story buildings. "I have a mule," she said as they clattered down a steep set of time-hollowed steps. "If we press swiftly, we may reach Hebron and the tomb before these Norman brigands, thereby averting much tragedy."

"What," Harold said, stopping at a cistern beside the street, "do this tomb and these callow Normans have to do with me? Nothing, I think. Why should I help *you?*"

Theodora turned and leaned her thin arms on the edge of the spring basin. "Little Athené," she said, scowling at Harold ferociously, "is usually a good judge of character—though now I wonder if she's not short-sighted in such bright light! An old woman asks you for help—help a loyal liegeman of the King should be honored to provide—and you quibble? Or have you not the wit to understand what is at hand?"

"The intrigues of kings and priests," Harold said, face stiff, "leave me cold. Be plain, old woman. What will happen if these knights seize the tomb?"

"War," Theodora snapped, wrinkled face flushing as her temper flared to match his. She hit the hard muscle on the outside of his shin with her walking stick. "Listen, oaf! The king holds Hebron only by a thread; there are no Christians living there save a bare company of knights mewed up in a tower overlooking the town. The Moslem elders have sworn fealty to Baldwin, but only while he respects their authority over the shrine of the Patriarchs. If Latin knights violate the compact, the whole valley of the Jordan will rise in revolt."

"Then tell the king of this yourself." Harold shrugged broad shoulders, taking comfort from the heavy weight of iron rings across chest and back. Despite the rising heat, the alleys of Jerusalem were ghost-cold. "Let him police these disobedient knights himself."

"Baldwin is not here," Theodora said, her voice sharp. "There is trouble in the north, in Galilee, where he and Tancred of Tripoli dispute over some olive groves. I need your arm and blade, Godwinson. Now follow, for time weighs against us!"

Harold's expression darkened and he stepped angrily around the trough. "Chance met in the chapel, were we?" His sun-bronzed hand darted out, catching the woman unawares. Theodora squeaked angrily as he lifted her bodily from her feet. "You are too-familiar, calling me 'Godwinson' when I've never mentioned my father in your hearing. Who spoke to you of me? Who said I would help you?"

The Saxon's fury burned clear in his face, making the old woman flinch away. She laid a gentling hand on his forearm, hiding her surprise at his effortless strength.

"Bishop Mixalos of Bethlehem mentioned you to me." She said, fighting to keep her voice steady. "Should I have need of a brave man who would not quail before many enemies."

"Mixalos . . ." Harold set her down, ignoring the sideways glances of a troupe of pilgrims climbing the steps from the winding steepness of St. Martin's street. The Saxon's anger ebbed slightly. "He tried to warn me, I grant. Though he is a Greek and unworthy of trust, as all your race are!"

Theodora straightened her rumpled habit, peering up at Harold. "Did the bishop play you false? No—he gave you such warning as he could. He is not to fault for the deaths of your friends in the south."

"What do you know of such things?" Harold's eyes narrowed, his hands clenching to fists.

"I am sorry," Theodora said, meeting his bitter, furious gaze with equanimity. "Would you have more innocents die while you stood aside, able to help, yet unwilling?"

"Another intrigue . . ." He hissed, and now she saw the despair and disillusionment fueling his anger. "Is there nothing but treachery and deceit in this cursed land?"

"No." Theodora shook her head sadly, leaning against her staff in relief. "Is your horse swift? Will he carry two

Full night covered Hebron with a velvet blanket, pierced here and there by the shining pinpricks of night-lanterns. Harold rode down out of the hills above the town with Theodora perched behind him on a Turkish saddle. The long road from Jerusalem had proved busy—herds of sheep and goats being driven to market, the ever-present dun-colored figures of local tribesmen, intermittent priests and pilgrims, a cavalcade of sunburned Latin knights—but none matched the old woman's half-heard description of their quarry.

"Turn left here." Theodora peered into the gloom. Harold guided the mare into a turn

"Another intrigue . . ." He hissed, "Is there nothing but treachery and deceit in this cursed land?"

with his knees. "There should be a bit of a hill. . . ."

The dusty road opened into an irregular plaza, barely a stone's throw across, reaching up to the domed shape of an odd-looking building. Harold felt the old woman's hand tighten on his shoulder and nudged the mare into nearby shadows.

A lantern burned fitfully above a doorway opening in a wall of massive, bronze-colored stone blocks. Two men in bulky tan robes and cord-wrapped kaffiyeh were sitting on a set of steps, spears leaning against their shoulders.

"The tomb of the Patriarchs—Abraham and Joseph," Theodora whispered. She sounded relieved. "And sleeping quietly, too. We have won our race, my lad."

Harold stared intently at the two sentries for a moment. "Why is this place important to the Saracens? What do they care for a Christian shrine?"

The old woman hissed softly behind his ear and he could feel her shake her head in dismay. "Child, Abraham is father of three faiths: the Jew, the Christian, and the Moslem alike. Three saplings grown from one seed . . . Moses, Christ Jesu, Mohammed, all trace their lineage to his noble house. Here too, the father of all these tribes lay to rest his holy forebears. . . ."

"Ah." Harold slipped down from the horse in perfect silence. Moving softly, he pressed the scabbard of his wicked longsword into Theodora's hands.

"What are you up to?" Her surprise at suddenly holding the knight's blade was only surpassed by the menace obvious in his posture.

"Neither of those men," Harold said softly, as he moved off into the darkness, "are Arabs."

The Saxon padded lightly up the uneven slope of the plaza. Both guards were talking quietly, paying no attention to anything outside the dim circle of lantern-light. Holding his breath to deny them even the slightest warning, he leapt up onto the stairs.

The man on the left looked up just as Harold punched him viciously in the throat. The blow fell true and the sentry crumpled back, choking. The other man leapt up, spear swinging around in a flash. Harold was already inside the weapon's reach and seized the wooden shaft. Before the sentry could react, the knight slammed the spear-shaft into his face twice, and the fellow collapsed, eyes rolling heavenward.

The man on the left looked up just as Harold punched him viciously in the throat. The blow fell true and the sentry crumpled back, choking.

"Now there is Saxon wit!" Theodora let the mare amble up to the base of the steps, a sly smile lighting her wrinkled old face. "Not a single thought of subtlety or deceit—just storm down the hill into the ranks of the enemy."

Harold ignored the historical aside and pushed open the door. An oil lamp barely lit a quiet, deserted hallway. He dragged the two bodies inside, taking care to keep their scabbards and belts from rattling on the floor.

"Do you need help dismounting?" The Saxon offered a broad hand to the old woman, who was looking pinch-faced at the distance between her feet and the irregular steps.

"I will manage. . . ." Theodora shot him a disgusted look, though she did not stir. "Age brings wisdom, child, not helplessness!"

"And a rude tongue," Harold replied, lifting her out of the saddle and setting her on the ground in a single, fluid motion. "Are all Greek ladies so discourteous?"

"Courtesy is for those who bathe regularly," Theodora shot back, jerking her arm out of his grasp. "I'm sure the 'ladies' who converse with you are well-tongued, sir knight."

A gleam of anger flared in the Saxon's eyes at the tone in her voice. "Shouldn't a serpent be silent in the house of the Lord?" He clucked at the mare and the horse shook her head, tossing a glossy mane before *clip-clopping* off into the darkness.

"You'll be pleased, grandmother—your fears have come true."

"How so?" Leaning on her staff, Theodora peered inside. The church seemed deserted, so she turned her attention upon the two fallen men. They were clad in the same tan-and-white robes as tribesmen they'd passed on the road, dark-bearded, with close-wrapped *kaffiyeh* around their heads. "Hmm . . . your eyes *are* sharper than mine."

The nun nudged the nearer man's booted foot—dark, soiled leather with rough stitching around the sole—"Our Normans in disguise? How could you tell from such a distance?"

Harold knelt beside the man who'd choked to death. He pulled the cloak open, revealing a brocaded jacket and a woolen green and brown vest. A cheap copper chain interleaved with crude gems hung around the man's neck. "No Saracen standing watch would spoil his night vision." The Saxon turned a shining lump of yellowish glass over in his hand. "And I've never seen a Frank with raw amber around his neck or such rough clothes as these."

Theodora drew aside the other sentry's cloak with the iron ferrule of her staff. Her thin nose twitched, smelling heavy perfume. She frowned in thought. "Smells like a German, but these woolens remind me more of Gotlander tradeware. Curious."

"There will be more." Harold dragged the two men into a dark alcove and wrapped them up in their cloaks. Then he gestured for the long blade, which Theodora was only too glad to return. The Saxon bound back his cloak, freeing his arms and drew Wurmbiter slowly, letting patience muffle the soft rasp of iron in the scabbard's throat.

"Take the lamp," Harold said, moving down the hallway in a gliding sidestep, the old sword leading. "And follow close."

A harsh ring of metal on stone met the Saxon as he ducked through a square-linteled doorway. Theodora pinched out the wick of their lamp, her face shining with the reflected glow of many torches. They both paused, silent, and the old woman's pale white eyebrows rose in disgust.

A long room set with high, narrow windows and round pillars opened out before them. Between the columns, alcoves studded the walls, holding painted scenes, mildewed statuary, and icons of the saints. The roughly whitewashed walls and crude pilasters seemed out of place in company with an exquisite marble floor.

Four men clustered around a stone grating set into the floor. Three were burly fellows in black, green, and brown with long beards. They were arguing, mallets and picks in hand, while the fourth, a hunched figure in tattered homespun, cowered nearby. Harold dismissed the little monk from his concerns; the Germans and their mining tools were far more a threat. He gauged the distance between himself and the nearest of the enemy, body tensed for violence.

"If you seek," Theodora's sharp voice cut the air, "the graves of the Patriarchs, you are looking in the wrong place."

All four heads snapped around, and the bearded men shouted in alarm, seeing the tall shape of a knight almost upon them. The monk disappeared into the fourth alcove with a barely audible squeak.

"Vas is?" The broadest of the three men bulled forward, negligently swinging his mallet in a hand like a round of pork. "Ve are here first! You vill go!"

"Do you seek the tomb of Abraham?" The old woman's piercing voice seized their attention. Harold tensed; these Germans seemed strong as bears and just as hirsute, and their thick woolens and brocade made passable armor, even against Wurmbiter's edge.

"Abraham is not buried here," Theodora continued, venturing a suitably large lie, her staff making a sharp rapping sound on the marble. "This is only a church; the Patriarchs are buried beneath the barrow of Tel Shahach, a mile south of the city."

"Bah!" The largest man growled. He advanced stiffly, raising his mallet. "Our fortune lies under these stones und no old voman and boy vill interfere!"

Theodora scuttled back, nose twitching at the haze of perfume around the man. She fetched up beside the column where the little monk had been hiding. Here at least the smell of myrrh, raw frankincense, and *khat* coiling in the air drove back the rancid-butter smell of the barbarians.

"If you break open the floor," she said, voice strained by the sight of the looming hammer, "there will be grave trouble."

"They'll not have the chance," Harold barked, striding forward. The mottled blade in his hand gleamed wetly in the torchlight, and all three barbarians drew back, muttering to one another in an unfamiliar, guttural tongue. The Saxon paused, seeing raw fear in their eyes. *What's this?*

But before he could speak, the sound of running feet in the hall made Harold swing round, trying to keep an eye on Theodora, the northerners, and the entranceway all at once. The living sentry burst through the doorway, cloak trailing behind him, his ill-wrapped kaffiyeh tangled around a bruised forehead and thin shoulders.

"Saracens!" He bleated, pointing back the way he'd come. "Hundreds uf them!"

Theodora moved, breaking the suddenly frozen tableau. "Swiftly," she hissed. "We can escape through the other chapel. Let's not linger here!"

"No!" The big man spun around, gesturing toward the stone grate in the floor. Theodora saw the ancient marble was pitted and cracked by hammer-blows. "Ve can't leave such a rich trove of relics behind!"

Harold took a half step forward, wrenching Theodora's attention away from the anguish in the man's voice. "These are no knights! Norman, German, or not," the Saxon hissed, "they're no more than tradesmen. See how they hold these crude arms?"

"Merchants?" Theodora turned on the three men, her agile mind finally grasping the queer intonation in their spoken words, the interlocking geometric patterns stitched into their vests and jackets, the ruddy-yellow jewels shining through their beards. "You're not even Christians," she said in growing alarm. "You're Balts—pagans from beyond barbarous Kiev! You've no use for the *church*, only for the bones of the saints who lie below!"

"True," growled the leader, huge fingers tight on the haft of his mallet. "Strange folk, you Cross-men, who favor bones over gold, but for those who vish to buy, Vaino of Reval vill sell!"

His brothers laughed at the jest, making the ceiling ring. Theodora looked sickly at Harold. The Saxon was listening intently, and now they all heard the clamor of men and the neighing of horses from outside.

"Get them out of here," Harold barked, springing away into the hallway. The Balts almost followed him, but the surviving sentry staggered—still wounded—and they caught him up with a murmur of concern. Alarmed, the nun shouted after him: "No blood, Godwinson, no blood!"

Theodora cast about, looking for a passage from the Greek side of the tomb to the Jewish. Her heart sank, seeing the doorways had been bricked up. Cupping her hand over the oil lamp, she summoned a spark of flame to the wick and then—holding the light highran swiftly along the alcoves lining the inner wall. "Somewhere. . . ." she muttered. "There must be a passage through. Curse their fear of pollution!"

The outer door swung wide with a crash, and cloaked men, sharp beards gleaming in the light of many lanterns, rushed in. Harold was waiting, barely having caught his breath, and lunged into their midst. The tribesmen were half-blinded by plunging from light to dark. He smashed the hilt of the sheathed sword into the leading man's nose, pitching him back into his fellows, then broadsided the next three with the scabbard held across his chest.

The outer door swung wide with a crash, and cloaked men, sharp beards gleaming in the light of many lanterns, rushed in.

The tribesmen grunted, running headlong into a steel bar, and Harold roared, driving them back. Men shouted in surprise, and he heard a wild cry of "Franji! Franji!" before throwing all three men bodily down the steps. They fell among their brothers in a tangle, bearing down the second wave of Saracens in confusion. Harold leapt back, shouting "For Christ! Christ and the Cross!"

A stray arrow tore his sleeve and *thonked* into the door frame. The Saxon threw the panel closed, feeling it shiver with another arrow, and dropped the locking bar. Sweat pooled under his armor, and Harold felt his entire body shuddering with adrenaline.

"A keen-close shave," he muttered, dragging a wooden garderobe into the doorway. He could hear many voices shouting outside and the sound of more men coming. *They'll have a ram in a moment or simply men with axes. . . .*

"Theodora!" Harold ran back down the hallway, Wurmbiter slung over his shoulder again.

The nun paused in surprise, feeling a draft against her face. She darted forward, one spidery hand feeling seemingly solid marble give under her touch. Then a great shout filled the air. The southern windows were open, letting her catch bits and pieces of the clamor outside. She could hear the words *franji*—their term for

the Frankish crusaders—and *one.*

"If they've only laid eyes upon Godwinson . . ." Theodora turned upon the Balts, who were dithering, tools still raised, trying to decide if they should break through the floor or flee. "You there, Vaino! There is no time for pillaging—the townsmen are hot to break through the door."

The pagans looked at her in surprise, and the nun was gratified to feel her grasp of their barbarous tongue return, sped by necessity and a keen memory. "Bring your tools and bags; leave nothing behind; there is another way out of this trap."

"Vere?" The merchant stared around, a sick, trapped look clear in his eyes. "All vays are blocked. . . ."

"There is a hidden door in this alcove." Theodora hurried past, snatching up the long tail of her habit with an impious curse. She ran to a cabinet behind the altar. "Quickly now, leave nothing behind!"

Harold burst from the entranceway, gesturing wildly for her attention. Theodora grunted, heaving up a pottery amphora sloshing with sacramental wine. Blood-red fluid splashed on her skirts. Not too far away, she heard the crashing sound of metal on wood.

"There's at least a hundred tribesmen outside," the Saxon said breathlessly. "I threw back the first rush."

"Are any slain? Blood spilt?" Theodora interrupted sharply, swinging the amphora onto her shoulder.

"No, I just . . . *hey there!*" The young knight sputtered, face splashed red. Theodora thrust the jug into his hands.

"Drink!" She commanded, stepping back smartly to keep her sandals clear of a spreading pool of wine. "If no blood is drawn," the nun snapped, "and they think you drunk, they'll treat you lightly. These four Balts I'll make disappear and meet you on the road to Jerusalem."

"Wha . . ." Harold shook his head, sending a spray of wine spattering

The tribesmen drew to a halt in surprise, spears and curved swords gleaming in the light of a forest of torches.

across the floor. His eyes were cleared, but the old woman was already gone. "I'm no drunkard . . ."

The rush of sandaled feet in the entranceway stilled his alarm, striking a sure clarity in his mind. It was ever so when the foeman closed to battle . . . *and my only shield a drunken guise. . . .* Harold raised the amphora high, spilling more wine into his mouth and burst into song as the first of the Saracens appeared in the archway.

"And they have sworn a solemn oath," he wailed, "John Barleycorn was dead! But the cheerful spring came kindly on," he hiccuped, "And show'rs began to fall; John Barleycorn got up again, and sore surpris'd them all."

The tribesmen drew to a halt in surprise, spears and curved swords gleaming in the light of a forest of torches. Harold stared owlishly at them, his heart sinking at the sight of so many glittering dark eyes. He belched, swaying unsteadily.

"Hallo!" The Saxon extended the amphora invitingly. "Summat of the god's blood?"

Theodora peered out through the nearly closed panel, watching Arabs swarm around the Saxon in a black-bearded tide. They stared at him with wide eyes, stunned by the sight of such a giant—Godwinson was easily a head taller than the stoutest of the locals—and by his blasphemy. Sighing in relief the Balts had chosen to pillage the *Christian* quarter of the shrine, sparing them all a massacre, she glanced around the chapel.

Cursed barbarians! One of the merchants had dropped his dreadful leather hat beside the grate. Clenching her teeth in irritation, Theodora narrowed her eyes and extended a claw-like finger. "*Ilthon!*" She muttered under her breath, forcing her mind into an unnatural, but long-accustomed pattern.

Harold bellowed in surprise as the Arabs swarmed onto him, grappling his arms and legs, throwing a rope around his broad, well-muscled chest. Theodora hoped the boy would survive, though their noise covered the rush of wind and the meaty smack of leather arriving in her outstretched hand. Grimacing, she tossed the hat down the narrow flight of steps. Pulling the door closed took only a moment, and all sight of the Saxon, struggling mightily among so many enemies, was shut away.

The marble panel shut out all light and noise. Theodora listened for the heavy tread of the Balts in their crude boots, but heard nothing. Frowning, she decided the risk of breaking her neck far outweighed the danger of discovery. Tapping the head of her cane

against the nearest wall, she declaimed "*Phos*!" A bluish radiance answered her call, revealing massive walls of closely fitted limestone pressing on a twisting flight of steps leading down into fetid darkness.

Below, Theodora found herself in a long, high-ceilinged chamber running crossways to the church nave above. At intervals, light fell through grating-covered openings, though the pale radiance of her staff afforded better illumination down among the dust. The sides of the chamber were cut with numberless cavities, each holding rotting wooden caskets or simple bundles of tattered cloth and bone.

The nun drew a drape of cloth across her face—tomb air was notoriously poisonous—and hurried along a winding, narrow track between the catafalques, funerary urns, and coffins. Splay-footed tracks, clear in the dust, led her along a passage, through a crumbling wooden door and onto a ramp plunging down at a steep angle.

Fear rising in her aged breast, Theodora pressed on, worried both for herself in this benighted sepulcher and for the youth—really, he was no more than a boy—she'd abandoned in the shrine above. "He'll be fine," she murmured to herself, though her doubts mounted with each step further into the pit. "A big lad like him can take a few blows on such a thick head. . . ."

The sloping passage ended abruptly in an antechamber opening onto some larger, abyss-dark space. Theodora slowed, almost stumbling as her foot caught a heavy lump on the floor. She looked down, hissing in alarm. The pale, bloodless face of Vaino of Reval stared up at her. Thin fingers drew aside his high, wooly collar. There were no marks. Not even a bruise. *A thin blade thrust from behind, into the lung—leaves no mark and makes no sound.* The old woman shook her head in dismay. *The work of a professional . . . but in whose employ?*

"So is blasphemy rewarded, man of the north." Theodora let the fabric fall, raising her staff slowly. In the blue corpse-light, she saw three more figures sprawled in the dirt. Beyond the dead men—the stiff, awkward arrangement of their limbs was far too familiar a sight—a ragged, cave-like room swallowed the dim radiance of her staff. She could make out damp walls streaked with nitre.

The clink of metal on stone drew her attention, and she saw a candle gleaming down at the bottom of the hidden cavern.

The cave-floor was smooth, ancient stone and rock worn away by the passage of ages, making a bowl-shaped cavity beneath a jagged roof. Theodora advanced cautiously, and in the pale light she made out a spry figure crouched on the ground, iron pry-bar held in nut-brown hands.

"You're no monk," she ventured softly in Arabic, the skin on her neck and arms prickling with goosebumps. The faint smell of *khat* and myrrh was barely perceptible in the cold, damp air of the tomb. Theodora shifted her feet, feeling alarm grow and nervously slipped a dagger from her sleeve. "Are you?"

"I am." The Arab rose gracefully, the iron bar swinging freely in his hands. "By the grace of Allah, you may flee now."

"Impossible." Theodora risked another glance at the nameless grave between them and saw a leather carrying-bag lying on the floor. "Don't even the Ismailis hold *this* grave sacred? You and those Baltic bone-merchants seem suddenly well matched . . ."

The man smiled, showing hashish-stained teeth.

Harold struggled fruitlessly, bound with ropes and held tight by dozens of hands. The outraged crowd of Saracens dragged him from the church and into a side-street. They made a great noise, shouting and calling out excitedly to townsmen peering from doorways illuminated by firelight. Upside-down, the Saxon could make out little more than a trampling forest of bare legs amid a choking cloud of dust.

A thin blade thrust from behind, into the lung—leaves no mark and makes no sound. The old woman shook her head in dismay. The work of a professional .

The ragged monk she'd glimpsed in the chapel looked up, dark eyes twinkling. His attitude of cowering fear had fallen away to expose a clear-eyed confidence. The white tonsure was gone as well; Theodora supposed the graying hair had been no more than wool held to a bald, polished pate by gum or honey. Tiny spots of blood on his forearms caught the light.

"No nun would carry such a fine, well-honed blade," he said in response, settling back on his haunches. The iron bar had dug into the corner of a square block inset in the dirty, rubble-strewn floor. Theodora noted, with a queer start of surprise, there was no name chiseled into the gravestone. "No Rhomané lady would own such command of the prophet's noble tongue. You serve the Emperor Alexius?"

"And you," Theodora retorted, finally remembering which of the Moslem sects used khat and the raw bark of the frankincense tree in their ablutions. She felt a little faint. " . . . are a student of the Old Man himself, Hassan-es-Sabah."

The crowd passed over a broken-down wall made of thin-pressed bricks and came to a jostling, murmuring halt. Harold swung his head around trying to see but received a sharp blow to the ear as a reward. Someone, a man of substance from his fine riding boots, pushed through the crowd. Voices called out in greeting, and the entire group of men holding onto Harold became very cheerful.

A strong hand seized hold of the Saxon's hair and dragged his head up. Growling with pain, Harold made out a neatly trimmed beard and keen, intelligent eyes.

"Drunk as a Frank!" The Saracen's voice was keen with amusement. "Smell the wine. He's fairly soaked with their sacrament. Well, there's a sure cure for such pious behavior. Throw him in!"

"Ho!" The tribesmen shouted, swinging Harold up as they took a step forward. The Saxon squirmed, trying to

break free, and felt one of the loosely corded ropes fray. The Saracens shouted "Ho!" again, and then Harold was flying free from a thicket of reaching hands, abruptly over the side of a public pool.

The Arab chieftain laughed with delight as the knight struck the water with a mighty splash. Harold wrenched free of the ropes as black water closed violently over his head. Then the weight of his armor was dragging him down in a swirl of bubbles and the torches above him were reduced to a constellation of wavering stars.

"Do you know who lies here?" There were no markings on the gravestone, but Theodora felt a little queasy to be walking on such hallowed ground. She guessed this must be the original cave, where Abraham had laid his father and his father's father's bones to rest. The patriarch would lie nearby, but *his* grave would bear a name. This one, this unmarked cavity, needed no name . . . not for the first man to behold the might and glory of the Lord. "You would despoil the tomb of the all-father himself?"

"Do you know who lies here?" There were no markings on the gravestone, but Theodora felt a little queasy to be walking on such hallowed ground.

"I would for power." The assassin answered, lean face lit with avarice. "I have lived long enough to know these old bones will buy the favor of any king wishing to hold an echo of paradise in his hands."

Theodora felt entirely cold, seeing the avarice and bald intent in the man's eyes. "Has the influence of the Order waned so much you stoop to bribery?" Her voice was shrill with disgust. "Have fear and malice failed at last? Did some ruler find courage enough to defy you?"

The assassin shook his head slowly from side to side, edging around the tombstone. The iron bar lifted, sharpened edge catching azure reflections. "We are patient, Rhomané. We can wait, even when a stripling like Alp Arslan of Aleppo defies us. In time, brash youth will face the prospect of death, and fear will take make him our servant. All men bow in time. . . ."

Theodora slid sideways and whistled sharply. Little Athené burst from her hood with a startled squawk and disappeared into the darkness above. The assassin ducked aside, surprised, and the nun stabbed at his eyes with her staff. He ducked, but could not avoid the brilliant white flash following her gesture.

Even Theodora—eyes squeezed shut—was nearly blinded, and she skipped aside, narrowly avoiding the blurring flash of his iron bar. Metal rang off stone, and she slashed sideways and down with the dagger.

The assassin was no longer there, dancing back, superlatively light on his feet for such an old-seeming man. Now, catching a glimpse of him in the wild, staccato light, Theodora realized the Ismailis was not old at all. His movements were so gracefully quick he could only be a youth. *Disguise within disguise, even as he deceived the Balts,* she realized, feeling fear draw close again. *Oh, how I wish the Saxon were here. . . .*

"Not a simple nun at all," the assassin's considering voice drifted from the darkness. "You've a little power at your command. . . ."

"You *will not* despoil this place," Theodora said, circling again, trying to catch him in the full light of her staff. The brilliant glamour would not last long, but she hoped to corner the Ismailis against a wall. "This shrine is under my protection."

"That of the Rhomanoi, you mean?" The voice hung, disembodied, in the air. Theodora froze, realizing she'd lost track of him in the shifting light. "Your Emperor is far away, noble lady. Yet still your Church is loath to give up the holy places to the *franji* . . . you fight for a lost cause. The Empire will never rule these lands again."

Something flickered in the darkness and Theodora bolted to the side, her staff blazing with green flame. The assassin rolled nimbly away, a thin blade shining in his hand. The bolt scored the ceiling, making smoke spill from the rock. *Athené—go!*

"Aren't you a little old to dance with me?" The calm, mocking voice echoed from the air again. Theodora felt hot from the effort. Athené swept past overhead, huge eyes searching the intermittent shadows. The sputtering glare of burning lime made a feverish, deceptive light. Scuttling backward, the nun muttered a litany of charms, hoping to seize just another candlewidth of life. She could feel the assassin watching her.

Groping with one hand, her staff dark in the wake of the burst, Theodora found the tunnel mouth and drew back, eyes nearly closed, hoping to catch some sensation of movement—either through her own ears or from Athené's keen senses. Despite complete concentration, she nearly missed the *pad-pad-pad* of swift, bare feet hurtling across the stony floor toward her.

She blocked wildly, slashing her staff at the sound. Something slapped the cane aside. Bluish light flared against the tunnel roof. Theodora squeaked, twisting her body away from a half-seen blow. A flicker of metal slashed through her sleeve, barely missing her wrist. She kicked at a dark shape, catching a turning thigh. The assassin hissed in amusement, soft feet dancing out of range. She glimpsed grinning white teeth. Theodora drew in a desperately needed breath and tried to keep her balance.

There was a moment of motionless waiting.

Theodora broke to the right, back into the cavern, shouting a single, booming word. The assassin moved in the same instant, lunging, the spike-like dagger flashing in the air where her knee had been. Athené swept past, wings blurring, and the air puffed with a cloud of grainy dust. The Arab ducked, rolled, and came up with his face covered by the edge of his hood. The nun leapt past, gesturing wildly for the owl to flee. Theodora bolted down the passage, groping to remember a certain phrase. An angry hiss followed her, then the sound of swift young legs racing in pursuit.

The owl wheeled, pale wings flashing against darkness, then soared up out of

sight. Theodora skidded through the old doorway, caught her foot wrong on the uneven floor, and went down hard. Despite a jolt of pure, unadulterated pain, she managed to swing around and strike the door-frame with the tip of her staff. *"Obsigno porto!"*

There was a sullen flash. The ancient door slammed shut. Something heavy crashed into the portal from the other side, making dust spill from rotten, creaking wood. Theodora gasped in relief, exhausted, her ankle throbbing fiercely. Now, she wondered, half-sick, *How long will it take for him to force past my poor, feeble spell?*

Nothing happened. No shattering blow came from the dark. She heard nothing, not even the patter of running feet. Sweat pooled in the hollow of her throat, and she trembled from head to toe.

"Athené . . . where is he?" The owl hooted mournfully, still circling above her. After a moment, she felt tiny sharp claws dig into the fabric at her shoulder. Blinking, Theodora managed to wipe grit out of her teary eyes. The staff woke to faint life at her touch, but even in such poor light she could see the passage was empty. The crumbling door was still intact.

Gone, I hope. The nun rose to her feet. She felt sore and tired. Her right ankle throbbed. *Not a young woman's game, this . . . not for me anymore. By the Christ, I'd not want to face him again.* Pursing her lips, she stared around the ancient tomb, realizing someone would have to stand watch henceforth. *Our strength is stretched thin,* she thought with a familiar, sinking feeling. *But there are friendly orders of monks among the Westerners . . . perhaps the friars of Kiriath Arba could be convinced . . .*

Swelling dawn lit dusty hills, gilding orchards of orange and olive with a cool pink glow. Harold Godwinson tramped along the long curve of the pilgrim road leading up out of Nablus. Below and behind the Saxon, the town was dark and silent, as yet undisturbed by cock-crow. The morning was raw, fresh and cold. He was wet and cold, and he swore loudly at the sight of a black shape hunched beside the road.

"Mistress Theodora." Harold's left eye twitched dangerously, and he forced a damp hand back from drawing the blade slung over his shoulder. "How pleasant to meet you again."

The old woman looked up, brow furrowed in surprise. "What happened to you? Where's your horse?"

"Gone." The Saxon halted, staring down at her with ill-disguised reproach.

Something heavy crashed into the portal from the other side, making dust spill from rotten, creaking wood. Theodora gasped in relief, exhausted, her ankle throbbing fiercely.

"Sheykh Abdullah Amir-Husayn took her—as fine a piece of horseflesh as he'd seen in twenty years—in recompense for my *intemperate drunkenness* rousting him from a warm bed on such a cold night." Harold pointed an accusing finger. "You owe me a new horse, old woman. And fresh clothes."

"Those seem well-washed," Theodora said mildly, struggling to her feet. "A rare occurrence, I'm sure. I am glad to see you alive and pleased the sheykh is of such a moderate and forgiving disposition."

"Apparently," Harold said, looking around as if hoping to surprise someone in the bushes. "I am not the first drunken knight he's had pitched in the town well. Only the largest. What have you done with the Balts?"

"They are dead." The nun raised her arms. "And I've twisted my ankle. You must carry me."

"Back to Jerusalem?" Harold brushed wet hair out of his eyes. "You killed them?"

"Not at all. Now lift me up." Theodora hopped uneasily on her good foot.

"Two mares of quality and a sure-footed mule." Harold crossed his arms, sticking out his jaw. "For my trouble."

"Your trouble?" Theodora fairly spat in surprise. "You were never in any danger . . . The king will give you far more, my lad, for foiling such a dastardly plot."

"You've the Baltic bone-robbers in your pocket then?" The Saxon gave her a smirk. "I see nothing to convince the king of anything save I can swim after a fashion and you fell down in the dark. You want me to carry you? You will meet my price."

"It's a wonder," Theodora growled, grimacing at him, "I ever let you accompany me in the first place!"

"Two mares, a mule, and fresh tunic, trousers, and undershirt." Harold proclaimed.

"Bah!" Theodora snapped her fingers at him, lost her balance,

and nearly pitched down the hillside before Harold caught her shoulders. "Fine . . . thieving, duplicitous barbarian . . . taking advantage of an old woman with a broken ankle . . . see how the saints greet you in Heaven!"

The Saxon laughed, bending down and swinging her tiny, bird-like body onto his back.

"You *are* strong," Theodora exclaimed as Harold rose. He did not seem to notice her weight at all. Thin, stick-like fingers clutched the collar of his jerkin. Little Athené hooted sleepily in her cowl, then settled back to sleep, head tucked under one wing. "Perhaps you are of some use after all."

Harold did not respond, turning toward distant Jerusalem, long stride lifting them up and away on the long dusty road. In the pure, clear light of morning he felt glad to be alive, hale and strong. The sorrow of his memories lifted, if only a little.

"Do you see the dome of the temple?" Theodora's voice was reedy in his ears, but he looked along the line of her pointing hand. Far off, nestled among the northern hills, he caught sight of something blazing golden in the rising sun, a beacon to summon all pilgrims home.

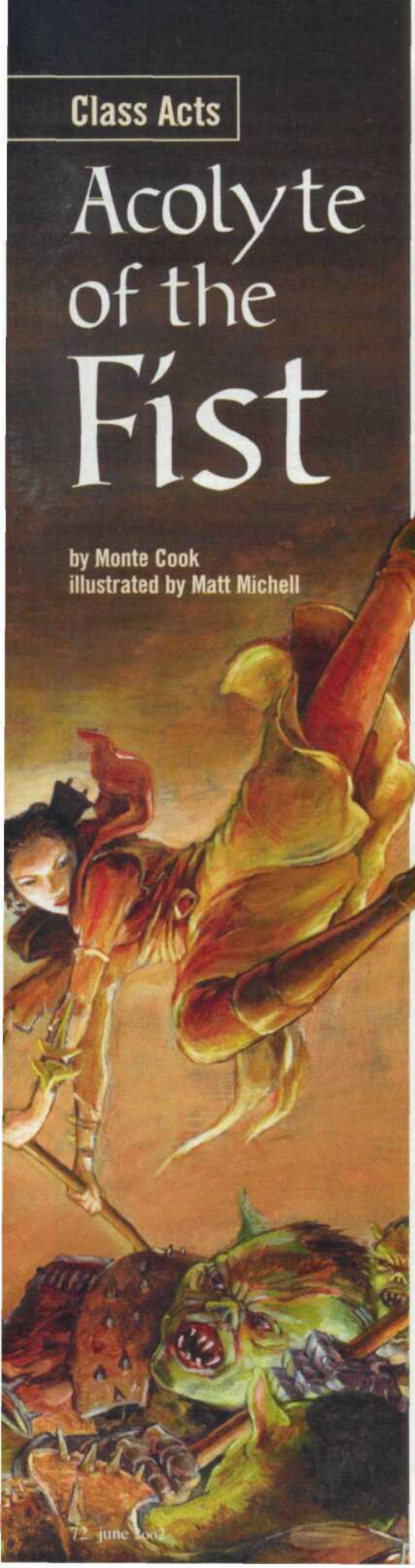
Finis

Nodwick in: DRAGON SLAY-RIDE
WE'RE GOING TO SLAY A DRAGON? I STILL HAVE PLACES THAT HURT FROM THE LAST TIME WE WENT AFTER ONE OF THOSE THINGS...
LOOK, I MADE SURE THAT THIS TIME WE GET ALL OF THE HOARD AS OUR REWARD, NOT A PERCENTAGE PLUS EXPENSES.
I DON'T KNOW, YEAGAR. THIS ONE SOUNDS PRETTY UN-NICE. THERE ARE LEGENDS ABOUT HIM STRETCHING BACK HUNDREDS OF YEARS.
I AGREE. HIS LAIR IS AN IMPENETRABLE FORTRESS OF TRAPS AND MAGIC WARDS. EVEN IF WE GOT THROUGH THEM, WE'D BE IN NO CONDITION TO TAKE HIM ON.
WHICH IS WHY WE'LL JUST HAVE TO LURE HIM OUT.
I THINK THIS WOULD EVEN REPULSE SOMEONE WHO EATS HUMANS FOR FUN.
PINK LOOKS GOOD ON HIM, THOUGH.
THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO GET HIM OUT, YOU KNOW.
OH, LIKE YOU COULD COME UP WITH SOMETHING BETTER...
HELLO! WOULD YOU MIND IF WE CAME IN AND SHARED OUR APOCALYPTIC RELIGION WITH YOU?
...AND SOLICITED A DONATION?
IS THERE A MR. BIGOL D. RAGON HERE? I WAS TOLD HE MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN A MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION...
LOOK, SOMEBODY HAS TO PAY FOR THESE ANCHOVY AND PINEAPPLE PIZZAS, DUDE.
WHY ARE ALL OF THESE PEOPLE SHOWING UP? IT'S ALMOST AS IF SOMEONE'S CALLING THEM...
OH, DON'T BE SILLY.
THAT WAS HORRIFIC! I DIDN'T THINK HE'D EAT THEM!
I KNOW. ANCHOVIES AND PINEAPPLE. YEEECCH!
I THINK THAT DID IT. HE'S FLYING AWAY IN ANNOYANCE!
SO NOW WHAT?
WE TAKE OFF AFTER HIM WITH THIS!
THAT'S A PRETTY SWEET FLYING BROOMSTICK! WHERE'D YOU GET IT?
THIS OLD THING? I WAS CAPTAIN OF THE TEAM AT MY ALMA MATTER WHEN WE WON THE WORLD SERIES FOR QUIDDITCH
BUT HOW WILL WE ALL FIT ON THAT?
WHY CAN'T I BE GROUND SUPPORT?
BECAUSE I NEED SOMEONE TO STEER THIS THING WHILE I MAKE THIS DRAGON MODULAR!
BUT I'VE NEVER FLOWN ONE OF THESE BEFORE!
THAT'LL JUST MAKE US HARDER TO HIT! TAKE US ALONG HIS BELLY! WE'LL GUT HIM FROM STEM TO STERN!

HE GOT SOME GOOD **TONES** OUT OF THOSE SCALES, THERE...
THE DRAGON LOOKS **ANGRY!** WE'VE GOT TO **HELP** THEM!
I WON'T BE ABLE TO **ZAP** HIM UNLESS HE BANKS **CLOSER**. CAN YOU DO ANYTHING?
I CAN TRY AND MAKE THEM **RESISTANT** TO **FIRE**...
HUH. WAS THAT A "**CONTROL WEATHER**" SPELL?
"**CREATE PICNIC**," ACTUALLY. PIE?
THE DRAGON IS ABOUT TO **ROAST** US, AND I CAN'T **SHAKE HIM!** WE'VE GOT TO **DO SOMETHING!**
I DON'T KNOW **WHY** I KEEP SIGNING YOUR **BIRTHDAY CARDS**...
FIRE PASSED THE WYRM'S LIPS...
...AND THE MIGHTY DRAGON **SELF-DESTRUCTED!**
HOLY HAMSTERS! WHAT **HAP-PENED?**
I DON'T KNOW... MOST DRAGONS **SUR-VIVE** BREATH-ING FIRE...
UGH! IT SMELLS LIKE I'M COVERED IN **BURNED MOOSE** SOAKED IN **PINEAPPLE**...
THE **PIZZAS!** I WONDERED WHY THERE WAS A **WARNING** ON THE MENU!
MENU?
NOW ALL THAT'S LEFT TO DO IS GO BACK AND GET THE **TREASURE HOARD!**
THE **DRAGON'S** HOARD?
YEP!
BACK IN HIS LAIR?
YEP!
THE ONE WITH ALL THE **TRAPS** AND **WARDS** STILL INTACT?
Y-- OH. RIGHT...
WELL, AT LEAST THERE'S ONE LESS **STINKY-POO FIRE-BREATHING NASTY** RUNNING AROUND.
I DON'T SUPPOSE WE COULD CONVINCE YOU TO COME HERE ON THE **WEEKENDS** WITH A **SHOVEL**...
NOT EVEN IF I WAS A **SUICIDAL GOPHER**.

Acolyte of the Fist

by Monte Cook
illustrated by Matt Michell



While some monks focus inward in a contemplative life of seeking enlightenment, members of the order of the fist focus outward. The central premise of the order's philosophy is "see what you want and take it." While that might seem selfish and greedy at first glance, that's because members of the order—who are called acolytes of the fist—do not focus on the "take," but on the "want." Members of the order believe that to want something that you cannot or should not have is insane, and to want something that could bring harm (in having it or taking it) to yourself or others is foolish. Thus, the order preaches the importance of goal setting—but in doing so carefully. When an acolyte of the fist sets a goal, he does not allow himself to be deterred from achieving it.

The order of the fist draws upon this single-minded resolve for its power. Members are able to channel their commitment and determination into their fists, granting them extraordinary and even supernatural powers.

Most acolytes of the fist are monks—usually those without leanings toward evil or good. Occasionally, a rogue or fighter joins their ranks. Any who can pass the required entry tests (and therefore achieve that goal) are welcome.

Acolytes of the fist rarely work together. They often practice and train in common monasteries, and they even live together in those spartanly appointed facilities, but their goals are individual and rarely coincide.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the acolyte of the fist prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Acolytes of the fist are proficient with all simple weapons. Theydo not gain proficiency with armor or shields.

Unarmed Damage: Acolytes of the fist are able to make unarmed attacks as a monk, gaining a second attack when their base attack bonus is +3, a third when it is +6, and so on (see the monk class description in the *Player's Handbook* for more details). Further, at 4th and 8th level, the type of die used for damage increases by one step. Thus, a character who makes unarmed strikes and inflicts 1d6 damage begins to inflict 1d8 damage upon reaching 4th level.

Fast Movement (Ex): Acolytes of the fist are faster than normal. At 3rd level, as long as he wears no armor and carries only a light load, the speed of an acolyte of the fist increases by 10 feet. His speed increases by another 10 feet at 6th level, and again at 9th level. This bonus to speed is inherent and is not affected by character size.

Fist of Speed (Ex): Once per day for each level of order of the fist he has achieved, an acolyte of the fist is able to take an extra partial action on his turn. He may take this partial action either before or after his regular action.

Leap of the Clouds (Ex): At 2nd level, an acolyte of the fist's jumping distance (vertical or horizontal) is not limited according to his height. If he already has the leap of the clouds ability from another class, he gains a +5 competence bonus to Jump checks instead.

Fists of Iron (Su): At 2nd-level, an acolyte of the fist gains the Fists of Iron feat (*Sword and Fist*) for free, regardless of whether or not he meets all of the prerequisites. (See the Fists of Iron sidebar for this feat's description.)

***Ki* Strike (Su):** At 3rd level, an acolyte of the fist's unarmed attack is empowered with *ki*. The unarmed strike damage from such an attack can deal

FISTS OF IRON [GENERAL]

You have learned the secrets of imbuing your unarmed attacks with extra force.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +2, Improved Unarmed Strike.

Benefit: Declare that you are using this feat before you make your attack roll (thus, a missed attack roll ruins the attempt). You deal an extra 1d4 points of damage when you make a successful unarmed attack. You may use this feat a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Wisdom modifier.

damage to a creature with damage reduction, such as a wight, as if the blow were made with a weapon with a +1 enhancement bonus. *Ki* strike improves as the acolyte of the fist gains experience, allowing his unarmed strike at 6th level to deal damage against creatures with damage reduction as if the blow were made with a weapon with a +2 enhancement bonus, and at 8th level to deal damage against creatures with damage reduction as if the blow were made with a weapon with a +3 enhancement bonus. If the character already has *ki* strike from a different class ability, the two bonuses stack.

Fist of Destruction (Ex): At 4th level, an acolyte of the fist gains the ability to destroy non-living objects with ease. When attacking an object, he subtracts his acolyte of the first class levels from the hardness of the object. Thus, if a 4th-level acolyte of the fist strikes an iron door (hardness 10), he treats that door as if it had hardness 6.

Fist of Mercy (Su): By focusing his *ki*, a 5th-level acolyte of the fist can heal rather than harm with his strikes. Once per day for every two acolyte of the fist class levels he has, he can strike a foe (or himself) and heal the amount of damage he would normally inflict, using his Wisdom modifier instead of his Strength modifier to determine the amount of damage healed. Fists of Iron and magical enhancements that normally add to damage cannot be used to modify this amount.

Evasion/Improved Evasion (Ex): A 6th-level acolyte of the fist can avoid even magical and unusual attacks with great agility. If he makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save (such as a red dragon's fiery breath or a *fireball*), he instead takes no damage. Evasion can only be used if the acolyte of the fist is wearing light armor or no armor.

If the character already has the evasion ability from another class feature, he gains improved evasion. He still takes no damage on a successful Reflex saving throw against attacks such as a dragon's breath weapon or a *fireball*, but henceforth he only takes half damage on a failed save. If the acolyte of the fist already has improved evasion from another class feature, he gains no benefit from this ability.

Improved Critical (Ex): At 7th level, an acolyte of the fist gains the Improved Critical (unarmed strike) feat for free, regardless of whether or not he meets all of the prerequisites.

Fist of Fury (Su): Beginning at 7th-level, an acolyte of the fist can injure creatures normally immune to blunt weapons. At the start of each turn, he must choose whether his unarmed strikes will deal piercing, slashing, or bludgeoning damage.

Fist of Power (Su): Three times per day, a 9th-level acolyte of the fist can summon supernatural energy to add to one of his unarmed attacks. He can choose from one of the following three effects (declared before he makes his attack roll):

- Unconsciousness. The foe must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the acolyte of the fist's Wisdom modifier + class level) or fall unconscious for 1d10 rounds.
- Forceblast. The foe suffers an additional 2d6 points of force damage.
- Confusion. The foe must make a Will save (DC 10 + the acolyte of the fist's Charisma modifier + class level) or become *confused* (as per the spell) for 1d10 rounds.

Fist of Energy (Su): Upon command, a 10th-level acolyte of the fist can enshroud his fists with an energy type of his choosing (acid, cold, fire, electricity, or sonic). He must choose the energy type before his attack roll. His blows then deal +1d6 bonus damage from the chosen type of energy on a successful hit. The acolyte of the fist is immune to his own fist of energy.

ACOLYTE OF THE FIST Requirements

To qualify to become an acolyte of the fist, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any lawful.
Tumble Ranks: 8.
Jump Ranks: 8.
Feats: Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Stunning Fist.
Special: Once a character begins taking levels as an acolyte of the fist, he cannot go back to another class until he has gained all ten levels of the class. Once he does this, however, he can go back to his original class—even if that class was monk.

ACOLYTE OF THE FIST Class Skills

The acolyte of the fist's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are as follows:

Str: Climb, Jump, Swim.
Dex: Balance, Escape Artist, Hide, Move Silently, Tumble.
Con: Concentration.
Int: Craft.
Wis: Profession, Listen.
Cha: Intimidate.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

HIT DIE
D8

ACOLYTE OF THE FIST ADVANCEMENT

Level	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Unarmed Damage	Unarmored Speed
1	0	+2	+2	+2	Fist of speed		
2	+1	+3	+3	+3	Leap of the clouds, Fist of Iron		
3	+2	+3	+3	+3	*Ki* strike (+1)		+10 ft.
4	+3	+4	+4	+4	Fist of destruction	+1 die type	
5	+3	+4	+4	+4	Fist of mercy		
6	+4	+5	+5	+5	*Ki* strike (+2), evasion/improved evasion		+10 ft.
7	+5	+5	+5	+5	Fist of fury, Improved Critical (unarmed strike)		
8	+6	+6	+6	+6	*Ki* strike (+3)	+1 die type	
9	+6	+6	+6	+6	Fist of power		+10 ft.
10	+7	+7	+7	+7	Fist of energy		

Starfall Pool

by Ed Greenwood · Illustrated by David Day

Perhaps a mile in from the southern edge of the Moonwood, almost straight north from the Hunters' Gate of Silverymoon, is a tranquil green glade, long known to Harpers, wherein lies "Starfall Pool."

The pool has given its name to the entire glade—a name now famous throughout the Silver Marches because of the ballad also called "Starfall Pool." Composed by an unknown minstrel, this long lay sings of the glade's dryad and strange magics.

"Starfall Pool" has many verses, differing from minstrel to minstrel, but its refrain is widely known:

Though to stray so deep is the act
of a fool
I regret no stride toward Starfall Pool

A sampling of verses follows:

There is a place in the deep green wood
Where the dryad Olsheirie dwells
Dancing where a keep once stood
Girt with magic of chiming bells.

Came I there by happy chance
And there I'll thither go again
To dream more dreams of fair romance
For by the pool I know no pain.

Trees old and green, dark and still
Ring 'round an oak as old as time
Fall down keep and rise up hill
Rest and hear the dryad rhyme.

Kindled by the dying embers
Of a fire that must not stay
Magic soars and then remembers
Warding me again away.

Back I'll go when I am able
Though long rides may lie between
Peace again upon my table
Lying on the moss so green.

Most versions of this ballad speak of the singer finding a refuge where he can rest deeply, in slumbers that seem to heal hurts and bring dreams of folk he doesn't know—half-elves and humans—wooing, laughing, and frolicking in the same glade where the singer rests. Some variants introduce dark, lurking magic around the pool that will snare the unwary, or a fell wizard who threatens the glade's continued existence, but the song is clearly meant to be of the "somewhere there's a fair and happy place, a refuge we can all take comfort in" sort.

There is indeed a Starfall Pool, a placid pond of drinkable water that lies in a small glade in the Moonwood. It was named for how many reflected stars it mirrors by night, and it is surprisingly small; it by no means dominates the glade.

What does dominate the glade is a huge oak tree, and a dryad does dwell therein—though her name is not "Olsheirie." She'll answer to Olsheirie, but if she doesn't like the look of the intruders, she'll hide in her oak and not show herself.

What Meets the Eye

Despite the ballad's theme of returning to the peaceful glade again and again, no trail leads to Starfall Pool; the only folk to regularly visit it are Harpers, and they take care to approach by slightly different routes each time.

The forest around the glade is typical of cold, damp northern Sword Coast forests. Dawn and dusk mists are common, and the trees are a mix of evergreens competing with gnarled oaks and many young, soaring duskwoods and maples.

The glade of Starfall Pool is surprisingly small, but it's hard to miss if one draws near by daylight because the forest floor in the area isn't rugged enough to block vision for any great distance, and sunlight striking down into the glade illuminates it in a shaft of light.

Save when snow buries everything, the glade is floored in ferns, lush green moss, and grass—everything looks green and growing. The gnarled old oak standing at its center towers over both the clearing and the surrounding forest.

Just visible in the grass and ferns near the base of the oak is a curving line of old, massive, largely overgrown stones: part of the ring-shaped foundation of a fallen and largely vanished castle tower, Northwind Keep.

The pool is small and placid, though thankfully free of the floating weed and scum that cloak many standing waters in warmer climes. Its banks are covered in moss, it has a population of trilling frogs, and its water is cool, clear, and drinkable. Visitors expecting natural beauty won't be disappointed; as the ballad claims, Starfall Pool is a pleasant spot to lounge or sleep beside, but those expecting something large and grand are apt to be downcast.

There is something striking to be seen in the glade, though: a floating shield.

The Floating Shield

Many folk have tried to seize this handsome large shield—only to discover that it's an illusion: All attempts to grasp the shield simply pass through it. The shield always floats upright, usually about 7 feet off the ground, but it can be encountered anywhere in the glade, even above the pool. What causes it to move about isn't known; some visitors report seeing it drift silently from one spot to another, and others say it "winked out" in one spot, and then shortly thereafter "blinked into being" elsewhere—but there's general agreement that it doesn't move often. As for the dryad of the glade, the Harper

Horthil of Elturel put it best: "She ignores the shield, and it ignores her." Olsheirie won't talk about the floating shield; if pressed about it, she'll say firmly that she doesn't know anything about it beyond the fact that it has "always been here" (for as long as she can remember).

Although reports suggest that the details of its appearance have varied over time, the floating shield has in recent years looked the same to all visitors. Painted on the front of the floating shield is a strange but distinctive rune or heraldic device, its meaning now lost. Some have described it as "a crowned fishhook," but its grand complexity makes it clear that it was intended to be no such thing.

Nearly every tale of Starfall Pool advances a different reason for the existence of the shield, including:

- It's the last remnant of an old warding spell.
- It marks a tomb.
- It marks where a great cache of magical arms lies hidden that works only to those who say the right words.
- The ghost of a man was forced into the shield by an evil sorcerer, and so it lingers, hoping for deliverance.
- It mirrors the movements of a real shield, preserved and animated by magic, that floats in a cavern somewhere underground and nearby.

Elminster's Notes

The Harpers rebuild the cellar every time a treasure-seeker tears it apart. I know not all of the portal's destinations, beyond the fact that one of them is atop the Stone Bridge, and another is a bare hilltop not far north of Secomber.

I can say that Olsheirie has more magics under that oak than she needs to defend herself against anything short of a large band of marauding orcs (or adventurers)—and that Harpers who find themselves facing such troubles won't hesitate to call upon me.

As to the puzzle of the floating shield, let me share this much: The apparition does mirror the movements of a real shield that floats in a cavern somewhere nearby, and other magic weapons are in that same cavern. A few beings—and no, I'm not going to reveal who they are—can, with the right words, call forth magical discharges from those cached weapons to erupt out of the illusory shield in the glade at foes they designate. There's no way to cause the floating shield to leave the glade nor any way to trace the location of the cavern through the illusory shield.

Lastly, there is a portal hidden in the pool itself, operated by immersed beings uttering the correct words, but it has nothing to do with the cavern of weapons, and it leads somewhere else entirely. Where? Let's just say more than one dragon waits at the other end. I do hope those emboldened by these words will wind up their worldly affairs tidily ere rushing off to Starfall Pool.

Northwind Keep

Some three hundred to four hundred years ago, a simple tower stood here—built by humans as a lookout and defensive shelter against orcs—a refuge in which a magic portal could be hidden to allow surprise forays of armed men into the Moonwood.

Some say the portal still exists—invisible, operating whenever anything living passes through it, and floating some twenty, thirty, or forty feet above the ring of foundation stones. As usual, tales disagree on where the other end of the portal is, and if it's safe to use or not.

What is certain is that the majority of the stones of the keep are now missing, blown to dust or carried off elsewhere. What remains of the ruins today are several dozen scattered stones little larger than a human fist, a stone-lined cellar, and a foundation ring with many gaps in it. The sixteen surviving foundation stones average about the size of a large strongchest.

The cellar is a square-sided hole 4 feet deep and 6 feet on a side, lined with small but close-fitted stones; if a visitor gathers fallen saplings and boughs and spreads a cloak over them, the cellar can be temporarily roofed to provide rough shelter and a measure of concealment. Tavern talk insists that a coffer full of gold coins was once found behind a loose stone in the walls of this cellar. True or not, that belief has caused every last stone of the cellar to be dug aside scores of times, to yield nothing more exciting than dirt. Folk in the North say magic or ghosts must rebuild the cellar—for shortly after every demolition, it's back to its intact state.

The Dancing Dryad

Olsheirie is a dryad no different than others. Over the years she's become quite friendly with many of the Harpers who visit the glade, and she emerges to speak with them (for she's always hungry for news of events large and small in the wider world) and dance—even when they have guests with them who are first-time visitors to Starfall Pool.

Olsheirie watches over folk sleeping in the glade, observing them and their gear closely if they're strangers, and arousing them if possibly hostile creatures approach if they are her friends.

In Your Campaign

Using an "Elminster's Guide" article in your game is easy. Simply switch the names of groups and individuals so they suit your campaign or come up with some new scenarios for how the elements of the article work together.

- The Harpers can be any good-aligned organization from your campaign. Alternatively, the group that guards the grove and its portals could be a neutral-aligned circle of druids or even an evil group of rangers.
- Perhaps a green hag inhabits the pool and masquerades as a dryad to ambush foolish people who come to investigate the grove after hearing the song she created about it.
- The floating shield might be a powerful magic item waiting for the proper wielder, like the sword in the stone from Arthurian myth.

To Harp by the Pool

Harpers use Starfall Pool as a meeting-place, a message-drop, and something of a refuge, trusting in their friend Olsheirie to watch over them as they sleep. They clean up the glade as she directs and bring druids to aid her if intruders have done her or her oak more lasting damage. Olsheirie keeps a gift from the Harpers, a magic item that allows her to cast a *sending* spell at will.

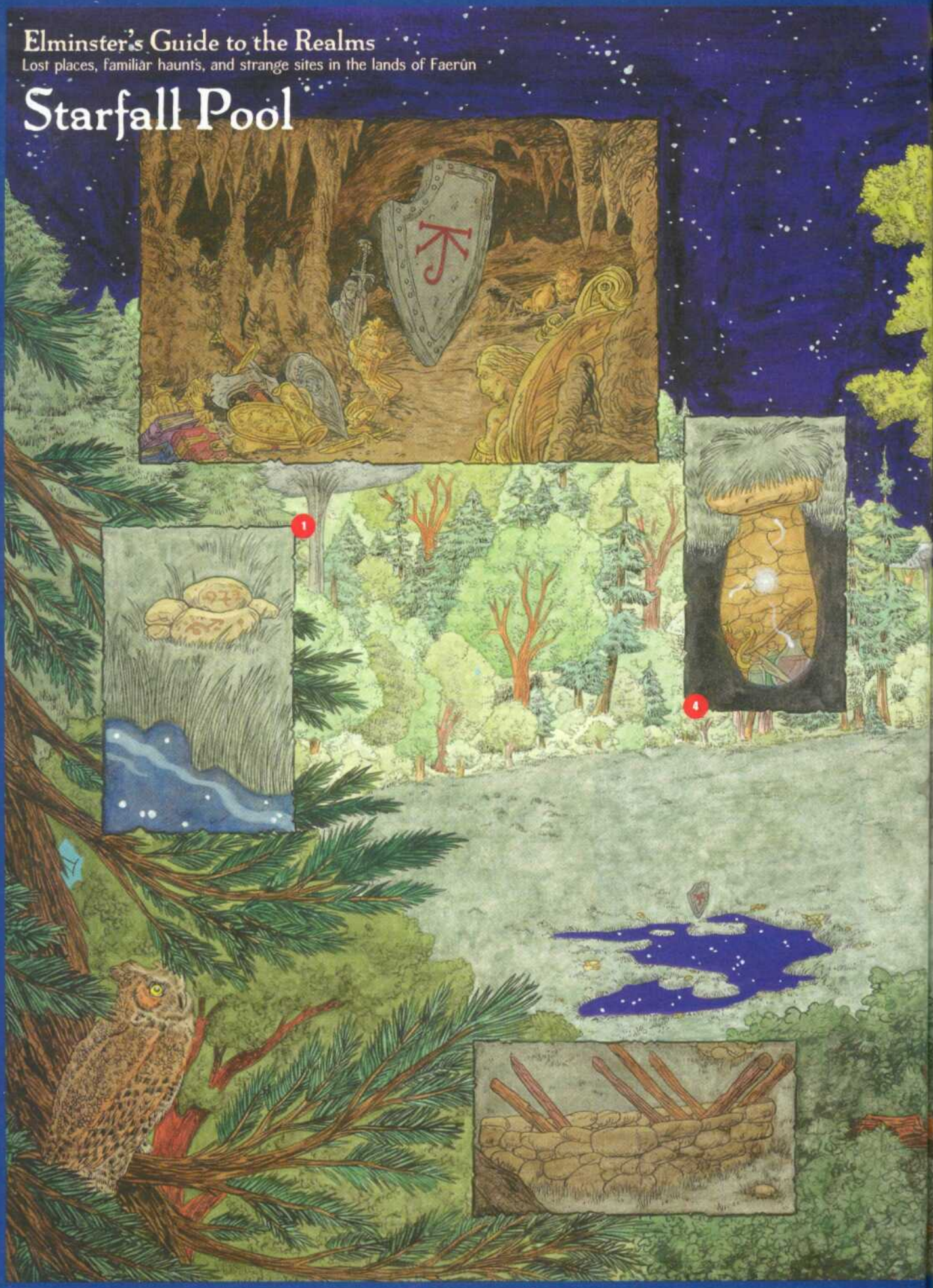
The Northwind Keep portal does still exist, and although the Harpers say its use is dangerous, a silent step through the portal transports the user to a certain room of an old Harper-owned stone house in the oldest part of Silverymoon.

Harpers arriving in haste to answer the dryad's *sending* emerge 30 feet above ground and fall to the ground unless Olsheirie has time to rig up a tripod of lashed-together poles that she keeps high in the limbs of her oak tree. She's become quite adept at throwing it down so that its legs splay out and it's "set up" with one heave.

Elminster's Guide to the Realms

Lost places, familiar haunts, and strange sites in the lands of Faerûn

Starfall Pool



Starfall Pool

1 Harpers use the stones of the ruined keep to leave messages for each other. Some are way-runes scratched on the stones, and others are written messages hidden in the ruins, their whereabouts conveyed by arrangements of certain other rocks. A Search check (DC 25) locates one of these messages, but the meaning might not be clear. A Decipher Script check (DC 30) can reveal the message.

2 The oak has many hollows and boughs where items can be left, but the dryad suffers no "additions" to her tree to remain for long.

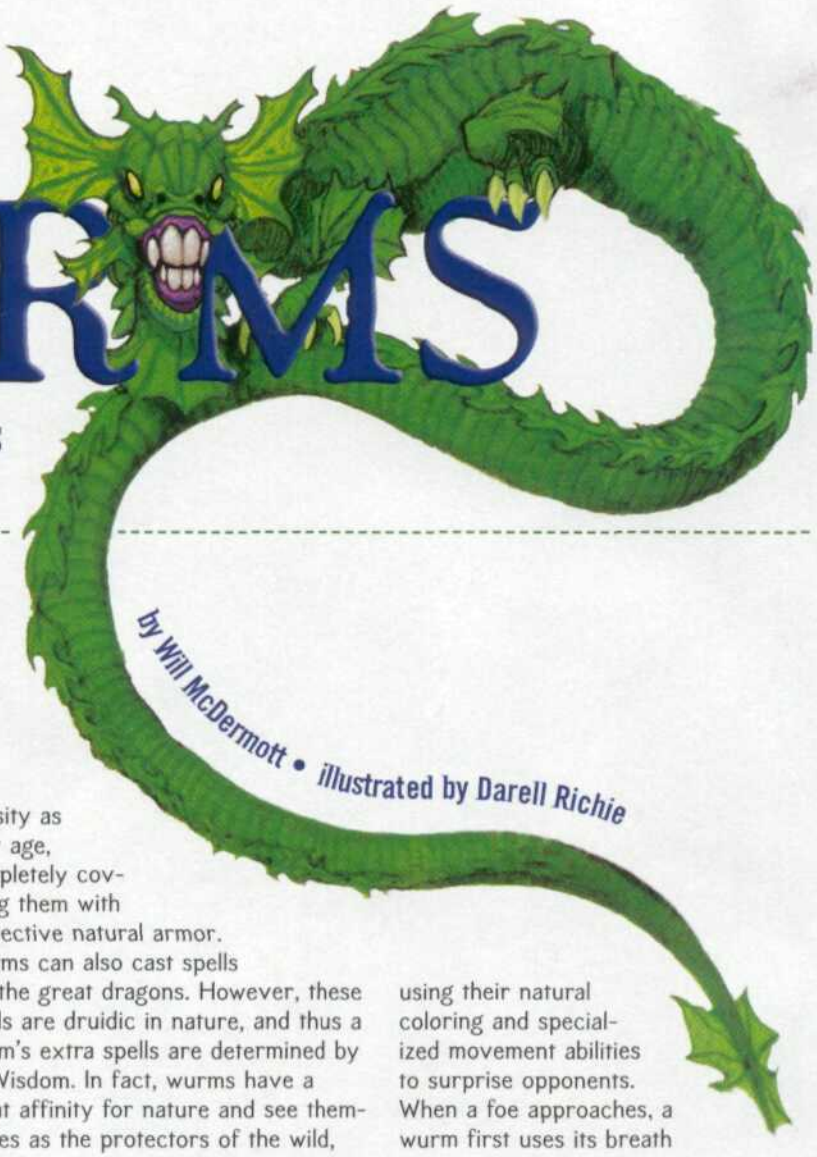
3 The depths of the pool are solid, bare rock (clearly seen through the acidic, clear water), and no treasure lies submerged there.

4 Stones in the grove can be lifted to reveal small hollows or cavities walled by other, buried stones—and in these, some minor treasures from the fallen keep still remain: magic daggers, wands, and potions. One foot-wide, 4-foot-long niche is known to be governed by a seemingly permanent *make whole* spell, which restores any item placed into it. A Search check (DC 20) locates one of these hiding places.

THE BESTIARY:

WURMS

of the Far Reaches



by Will McDermott • illustrated by Darell Richie

In the far reaches of the world—in those wild places that man and elf rarely tread—live mysterious draconic creatures called wurms. Distant cousins of the great chromatic and metallic dragons, the wurms lack wings, but they are still quite fearsome in their own right. Created by powerful druids long ago, their abilities are the result of a grand experiment to protect the wilderness from the intrusion of "civilizing" forces.

Few adventurers encounter more than one or two wurms in a lifetime; the wurms are adept at remaining hidden, using natural coloring and the ability to climb above, burrow beneath, or swim away from foes to evade their enemies. Of those hearty adventurers who have faced a wurm, even fewer have survived: After all, wurms are dragons.

Dragons or Beasts?

Physically, wurms resemble snakes more than dragons. Their long, narrow bodies are built low to the ground and strong, sinewy tails end far behind their rear legs. For most wurms, their legs barely raise their snake-like bodies above the ground, and only the largest wurms can use their claws to attack, relying instead on their powerful jaws, their breath weapons, and their strong tails, which can wrap around a prey and squeeze it to death.

Wurms are both hearty and intelligent, growing to immense size and strength, and they speak Draconic (although older wurms learn to speak Druidic, Sylvan, and Elven). In addition, wurms are covered in overlapping scales that grow in size and density as they age, completely covering them with protective natural armor. Wurms can also cast spells like the great dragons. However, these spells are druidic in nature, and thus a wurm's extra spells are determined by its Wisdom. In fact, wurms have a great affinity for nature and see themselves as the protectors of the wild, and often protect weaker creatures. However, the various wurm types have diverse personalities and thus approach this stewardship differently.

Wurms are more caring parents than dragons, often mating for life and producing one to three offspring that remain in the clutch, protected by the elder wurms until they are ready to venture forth and form their own families. At birth, wurmlings are typically 3-4 feet in length and generally no more than a foot in diameter through the torso. They can grow to a length of 6-8 feet in only a few short years. Adults (called greater wurms) are typically 9-11 feet long and roughly 3 feet in diameter. As they age, wurms continue to grow, some reaching 30 feet in length and five feet in diameter.

Combat

Wurms like to lie in wait for their prey, using their natural coloring and specialized movement abilities to surprise opponents. When a foe approaches, a wurm first uses its breath weapon to slow down or incapacitate its opponent and then attacks. Larger wurms try to coil around opponents by first slapping with their tails and then constricting prey and squeezing it to death.

Breath Weapon: Wurms create special liquids in sacs behind their jaws. Once a wurm uses its breath weapon, it can't use it again for 1d4 rounds. A blast from a breath weapon always leaves from the wurm's mouth and extends in the direction of the wurm's choice, with an area as noted below. The saving throw type varies by breath weapon, but the saving throw DC is dependent on the wurm's size. If the wurm has a higher or lower than normal Constitution score or number of Hit Dice, this changes the saving throw DC as noted in the *Monster Manual*. Breath weapons come in two basic shapes, line and cone, whose areas vary by the wurm's size.

Wurm Size	Line*	Cone	Save DC
Small	40 ft.	20 ft.	13
Medium-size	60 ft.	30 ft.	16
Large	80 ft.	40 ft.	20
Huge	100 ft.	50 ft.	26

*A line is always 5 feet high and 5 feet wide.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the wurm must hit with its tail slap attack. If it gets a hold, it can constrict.

Constrict (Ex): The wurm can coil around its prey to deal its constriction damage plus tail slap damage with a successful grapple check against any creature of equal size or smaller.

Keen Senses (Ex): Wurms see four times as well as a human in low light conditions and twice as well in normal light. They also have darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Spells: A wurm knows and casts divine spells as a druid as shown below, gaining bonus spells for a high Wisdom score.

Wurm Size	Caster Level
Small	4
Medium-size	8
Large	12
Huge	20

Skills*: Wurms have a natural coloration and limited chameleon ability that grants them a +8 racial bonus to Hide checks in their home environment (a forest wurm in a forest). In addition, wurms with a climb or swim speed receive a +8 racial bonus to Climb or Swim skill checks depending on which movement type they have.

Wurm Characters

A wurm's favored class is druid. Wurms do not often progress in a class, but wurm druids and wurm rangers have been seen on rare occasions. Wurm druids worship Obad-Hai.

Forest Wurm

In the darkest reaches of the woods, the forest wurm waits, hidden among the boughs of the great trees, ready to drop on any prey foolish enough to venture underneath.

Forest wurms are natural protectors of the forest, much like treants. In fact, these wurms have been known to ally with treants to thwart incursions into the forest by invading humanoids and giantkin. They especially hate trolls, who often destroy trees, kill animals, and despoil the forest. Some forest wurms believe so deeply in their role as the protectors of the forest that they are willing to sacrifice themselves for the greater good of the forest and their brethren.

Thus, forest wurms are fierce fighters when their home is threatened, willing to fight to the death to protect the trees. It is their resin-like breath weapon that truly allows the forest wurm to rule the depths of the woodlands. This sticky substance, reminiscent of tree sap, quickly adheres to any surface and hardens, making it nearly impossible to move. The forest wurm uses it to slow down prey prior to attacking.

Speed: 40 feet, climb 40 feet

Breath Weapon (Su): The forest wurm can breathe forth a cone of sticky resin that hardens quickly, similar to the substance of a tanglefoot bag. Creatures in the area become covered in the resin and entangled, suffering a -2 circumstance penalty to attacks and a -4 circumstance penalty to effective

	Wurmling Small Dragon	Adult Wurm Medium-Size Dragon	Greater Wurm Large Dragon	Elder Wurm Huge Dragon
Hit Dice:	4d12+4 (30 hp)	8d12+16 (68 hp)	12d12+48 (126 hp)	20d12+120 (250 hp)
Initiative:	+7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)	+6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)	+5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)	+4 (+4 Improved Initiative)
Speed:	See type	See type	See type	See type
AC:	18 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +4 natural)	20 (+2 Dex, +8 natural)	22 (-1 size +1 Dex, +12 natural)	26 (-2 size, +18 natural)
Attacks:	Bite +8 melee	Bite +13 melee, tail slap +7 melee	Bite +20 melee, tail slap +17 melee, 2 claws +17 melee	Bite +31 melee, tail slap +28 melee, 2 claws +28 melee
Damage:	Bite 1d6+3	Bite 1d8+4, tail slap 1d4+2	Bite 2d6+8, tail slap 1d6+4, claw 1d8+4	Bite 2d8+12, tail slap 1d8+6, claw 1d6+6
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.	5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.	10 ft. by 30 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	Breath weapon, see type	Breath weapon, see type	Breath weapon, improved grab, constrict 2d6+8, see type	Breath weapon, improved grab, constrict 2d8+12, see type
Special Qualities:	Keen senses, spells, see type	Keen senses, spells, see type	Keen senses, spells, damage reduction 5/+1, SR 19, see type	Keen senses, spells, damage reduction 10/+1, SR 24, see type
Saves:	Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +5	Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +8	Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +11	Fort +18, Ref +12, Will +16
Abilities:	Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10	Str 18, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 12	Str 26, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 14	Str 34, Dex 19, Con 22, Int 16, Wis 19, Cha 16
Skills:	Animal Empathy +4, Climb +6*, Hide +11*, Knowledge (nature) +4, Swim +6*, Wilderness Lore +5	Animal Empathy +7, Climb +10*, Hide +8*, Jump +9, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Spot +7, Swim +10*, Wilderness Lore +8	Animal Empathy +12, Climb +18*, Hide +7*, Jump +17, Knowledge (nature) +12, Listen +12, Move Silently +10, Spot +12, Swim +18*, Wilderness Lore +13	Animal Empathy +21, Climb +22*, Hide +7*, Jump +30, Knowledge (nature) +25, Listen +26, Move Silently +18, Spot +26, Swim +30*, Wilderness Lore +22
Feats:	Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (bite)	Improved Initiative, Track, Weapon Focus (bite)	Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Track, Weapon Focus (bite)	Cleave, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (bite)
Climate/Terrain:	See type	See type	See type	See type
Organization:	Clutch (1-3)	Solitary or pair (1-2)	Solitary or pair (1-2)	Solitary or pair (1-2)
Challenge Rating:	5	9	15	23
Treasure:	Standard	Standard	Standard	Standard
Alignment:	Often neutral (see type)	Often neutral (see type)	Often neutral (see type)	Often neutral (see type)
Advancement Range:	Wurmling 5-7 HD (Small)	Wurm 9-11 HD (Medium-size)	Greater wurm 13-19 HD	Elder wurm 21-27 HD (Huge)
ECL:	7	11	17	25

Dexterity. An entangled creature must succeed at a Reflex save or be glued to the ground, unable to move. Even with a successful save, the creature can only move at half speed.

A character glued to the ground can break free with a successful Strength check (DC = to the Reflex DC + 10), or by dealing 20 points of damage to the resin with a slashing weapon (hitting the resin is automatic). Once free, the creature moves at half speed. A character capable of spellcasting who is bound by the resin must make a Concentration check (DC 15) to successfully cast a spell. The resin becomes brittle and falls away after 10 minutes.

Scent (Ex): A forest wurm can detect opponents (even invisible or hidden foes) within 30 feet by sense of smell. Forest wurms can also use this ability to follow tracks by smell. For a full description of this ability, see the *Monster Manual*.

Climate/Terrain: Warm or temperate forest

Alignment: Usually neutral good

Tundra Wurm

In the harsh, frozen wastes of the far north, the tundra wurm roams the ice plains searching for food and protecting its secluded home from harm.

For Your Character

You can use wurms as a player if your DM allows you to. Here are a few ideas of how the wurms might be used by players on the other side of the DM's screen:

- ECLs (Equivalent Character Levels) are presented for each of the wurm sizes. Your DM might allow you to play a wurm as a character.
- The Summoning the Wurms sidebar presents new druid spells that allow you to summon the wurms. Ask your DM if they would be appropriate for her campaign and for your character to cast them.
- The wurms give a low-level ranger a reason to choose dragons as a favored enemy. Despite their ties to the environment, some wurms are dangerous to sentient creatures and the local ecology.
- A paladin of a nature god might be granted a wurm as a mount. Small paladins, like gnomes and halflings, could have an adult wurm as a mount at 14th level. Medium-sized paladins could have a greater wurm as a mount at 20th level. Forest and hill wurms make the best paladin mounts.

Tundra wurms are generally broader than other wurms, with thicker, more muscular legs. They are built low to the ground, making them very stable on the ice and shifting snow of the frozen north. They use their strong legs and powerful claws to climb up and down crevasses and dig through the ice and snow, allowing these wurms to live in remote caves of their own design where other creatures of the north cannot reach them.

With scales of subtly changing whites and blues, the tundra wurm can move almost undetected through the frozen wastes in search of prey. They then use their deadly breath weapon to sap strength from their prey.

Speed: 30 feet, burrow 10 feet, climb 20 feet

Breath Weapon (Su): The tundra wurm's breath weapon is a line of strength-draining cold. Creatures in the area suffer cold damage (Reflex save for half) and must make a Fortitude save or suffer temporary Strength damage.

Wurm Size	Cold Damage	Strength Damage
Small	2d6	1d4
Medium-size	4d6	1d6
Large	6d6	1d8
Huge	10d6	2d6

Cold Subtype (Ex): Cold immunity; double damage from fire except on a successful save.

Ice Walk (Ex): A tundra wurm is as sure-footed on ice and snow as in dry conditions and never needs to make a Balance check to move on ice during normal conditions.

Climate/Terrain: Cold plains and mountains

Alignment: Usually chaotic neutral

Sand Wurm

Beneath the shifting sands live the sand wurms, a horrible secret that can burst forth without warning and drag an unsuspecting victim down into its sandy tomb.

Sand wurms have much longer legs than other wurms; especially the front legs, which are used for burrowing through the sand at a rapid rate. Above the dunes, they tend to tower over their prey due to the length of these front legs and can scamper quickly and effortlessly over the shifting sands with surprising agility for such large creatures.

For Your Campaign

Wurms are easy to introduce to any campaign. Here are a few ideas:

- The wurms don't need to be related to druids or even particularly interested in protecting nature. In this case you should replace their druid spellcasting ability with the spellcasting ability of clerics, wizards, or sorcerers. The wurms can then be imported as any new monster would.
- The wurms are creatures of nature and allies of druids. You could introduce them into your campaign by allowing a druid PC to discover the spells in the Summoning the Wurms sidebar carved on an ancient monolith or written on a scroll of druid spells.
- The wurms might not exist as creatures of the environment. Perhaps they were driven to extinction long ago, or maybe they never existed. The spells presented in the Summoning the Wurms sidebar summon the wurms as manifestations of the environment.
- Wurms and normal dragons might be age-old enemies, fighting periodic wars for supremacy that bridge the normal conflicts of alignment.
- Perhaps traditional dragons do not exist in your campaign. Instead, the nature-themed wurms occupy that position in the ecology, power structure, and myth of the world.
- Maybe only certain wurms exist in your campaign, serving the giants as mounts and allies. In this case, only hill (hill giants), cave (stone giants), magma (fire giants), storm (storm giants), tundra (frost giants), and mountain (cloud giants) wurms roam your world.

Sand wurms make their homes beneath the sand, either in abandoned tombs or in natural caves. Protected from the elements under the dunes, sand wurms raise large families in a strict matriarchal society. While the males hunt, the female sand wurms rule the nest and the surrounding tomb complex, forming alliances that strengthen the family and arranging mates for their young. Sand wurms often work with nearby formian colonies for the mutual protection of the world beneath the dunes.

Speed: 40 feet, burrow 20 feet

Breath Weapon (Ex): A sand wurm can exhale a cloud of contact poison that extends outward from the wurm in a cone. Creatures in the area must make a Fortitude saving throw when first exposed to avoid the initial poison damage and a second saving throw 1 minute later. Dexterity damage is temporary. Unconsciousness lasts for 1d3 hours.

Wurm Size	Poison Damage Initial	Secondary
Small	1d6 Dex	Unconsciousness
Medium-size	1d8 Dex	Unconsciousness
Large	2d6 Dex	Unconsciousness
Huge	2d8 Dex	Unconsciousness

Tremorsense (Ex): While underground, a sand wurm can automatically sense the location of any moving thing within 90 feet that is in contact with the ground.

Sand Walk (Ex): A sand wurm is as sure-footed on shifting sand as on solid ground and never needs to make a Balance check to move on sand during normal conditions.

Climate/Terrain: Any desert
Alignment: Usually lawful neutral

Swamp Wurm

Swamp wurms hunt in the depths of dank mires, racing through the still, green waters and striking without warning. Swamp wurms have developed the ability to swim as naturally as fish, diving beneath the waters to avoid detection. Swamp wurms are generally grayish-brown in color with streaks of dull-green on their backs and tails.

Swamp wurms usually hunt in pairs, leaving the eldest offspring to guard the nest until it is old enough to hunt. In a battle, swamp wurms rely on their keen senses to track down and stalk their prey from afar, then move in with blinding speed.

Swamp wurms have been known to fight beside neighboring lizardfolk tribes when a larger danger, such as an invasion by humanoids, threatens the entire swamp.

Speed: 30 feet, swim 30 feet

Breath Weapon (Su): A swamp wurm can spew forth a line of rancid muck. Creatures in the area must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw or be nauseated (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for a description of this condition) for a number of rounds as determined by the wurm's size.

Wurm Size	Rounds of Duration
Small	1d4
Medium-size	1d6
Large	1d8
Huge	1d10

Scent (Ex): A swamp wurm can detect opponents (even invisible or hidden foes) within 30 feet by sense of smell. Swamp wurms can also use this ability to follow tracks by smell. For a full description of this ability, see the *Monster Manual*.

Climate/Terrain: Temperate and warm marsh
Alignment: Usually neutral

Sea Wurm

Beneath the waves lapping at a rugged coastline lurk the sea wurms, attacking and devouring all who dare invade their homes. Truly amphibious, sea wurms are as at home beneath the waters as they are on dry land, perhaps even more so. These dark blue and green creatures have gills for breathing underwater and lungs for breathing air. They swim by undulating their sleek, snake-like bodies, and they use their keen senses to locate prey and then move in for the kill. Sea wurms are ruthless in their defense of the sea, viewing all humanoid races as invaders who must be driven from their domain. They attack ships and merfolk cities alike, showing no mercy in their attempts to make the sea safe for the denizens of the deep.

Sea wurms tend to patrol the open water alone, but they have been known to come to the aid of whales who have been attacked from ships. Sea wurms use their breath weapons to blind foes aboard ships before crashing into the vessel or jumping onto the deck to maul attacking sailors.

Sea wurms make their homes in caves dug into rugged coastlines or within the shores of volcanic islands. These caves can only be accessed through underwater tunnels, and some are quite large, containing multiple rooms and air shafts. However, adult sea wurms are rarely found in their caves, spending most of their time patrolling the open water for signs of man's incursions or expansion by the local merfolk tribes.

Speed: 20 feet, swim 90 feet

Breath Weapon (Ex): Sea wurms can spray a cone of blinding spittle. Creatures in the area must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw or be blinded.

Water Breathing (Ex): The river wurm can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use its breath weapon, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

Summoning the Wurms

The following druid spells can be used to summon a wurm to help the summoner fight against the destruction of nature.

Summon Wurm I
Conjuration (Summoning) [see text]
Level: Drd 5
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 full round
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Effect: One summoned wurm
Duration: 1 round/level (D)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

This spell summons one of the 12 types of wurm. The wurm appears where you designate and acts immediately on your turn. It attacks your opponents to the best of its ability. If you can communicate with the creature, you can direct it not to attack, to attack particular enemies, or to perform other actions. A summoned wurm may not cast summoning spells.

The spell conjures one wurmling that is appropriate to the environment where you are located. If more than one type of wurm could logically be found in your locale, you may choose from all appropriate types.

Summon Wurm II
Conjuration (Summoning) [see text]
Level: Drd 7
Effect: One or more wurms, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart

As *summon wurm II*, except that you can summon one adult wurm or 1d3+1 wurmlings. All summoned wurms must be of the same type, even if more than one type of wurm could be summoned.

Summon Wurm III
Conjuration (Summoning) [see text]
Level: Drd 9
Effect: One or more wurms, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart

As *summon wurm I*, except that you can summon one greater wurm, 1d3+1 adult wurms, or 4d4 wurmlings.

Scent (Ex): A sea wurm can detect opponents (even invisible or hidden foes) within 30 feet by sense of smell, even underwater. Sea wurms can also use this ability to follow a trail by smell. For a full description of this ability, see the *Monster Manual*.

Climate/Terrain: Temperate and warm aquatic (salt water)
Alignment: Usually neutral evil

River Wurm

River wurms are the protectors of the wildest rivers and deepest lakes, killing and dying to keep these great waters pure.

River wurms dwell near the headwaters of rivers and on the shores of unspoiled inland lakes, drawn there by the purity of the water and the serenity of these remote locales. Peaceful by nature, the river wurm tends to lead a solitary life, living off the bounty of the water, but always ensuring that the balance of nature is maintained and the water continues to flow. However, if the purity or serenity of its home is disturbed, this peaceful creature reacts quickly and forcefully to punish those who would despoil nature's source of life.

In a battle, river wurms are deadly, able to surprise foes by leaping great distances out of the water to scuttle small vessels or land on the deck of larger ships. Its strange breath weapon can completely incapacitate even the strongest warriors, for it is almost impossible to escape.

Speed: 40 feet, swim 40 feet
Breath Weapon (Su): River wurms can let loose a spray that extends outward from the wurm in a cone. The spray envelopes foes in a slippery foam. Creatures in the area must succeed at a Reflex saving throw or be sufficiently covered by foam to suffer its effects.

Creatures covered by the foam must make a Balance check (DC = to the Reflex DC + 5) each round or fall prone. The foam is impossible to remove by simple scraping, wiping, or washing, but 15 points of fire or acid damage destroys it. Note that fire or acid damage that affects the foam affects the creature covered in foam. The foam dissipates naturally in a number of rounds as determined by the river wurm's size.

Wurm Size	Rounds of Duration
Small	2d4+1
Medium-size	2d6+2
Large	2d8+4
Huge	4d6+6

Water Breathing (Ex): The river wurm can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use its breath weapon, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

Water Leap (Su): River wurms do not have the usual maximums for jumping distance when jumping out of the water. In addition, three times per day, a river wurm can add +30 to a single Jump check. This jump must begin in the water, but it does not need to end in the water.

Climate/Terrain: Temperate and warm aquatic (fresh water)
Alignment: Usually neutral

Grassland Wurm

Bursting out of the tall grass with the speed of a cheetah and the mass of an elephant, the hunting grassland wurm is a horrendous sight to face.

Grassland wurms live in vast, uncharted savannahs and plains, maintaining the natural order of these great grasslands by planting, cultivating, and protecting the many indigenous flora found in the fields. Grassland wurms are the fastest of all the wurms on the ground, and they have learned to use this speed in combat, preferring to trample their foes rather than stand toe to toe in a melee. If forced into a melee, the wurm uses its breath weapon to *confuse* its foe and then uses its great speed and surprising agility to quickly defeat the *confused* opponent.

Speed: 60 feet
Breath Weapon (Su): Grassland wurms can exhale a line of magic causing foes to become *confused*. Creatures in the area must make a Will saving throw or behave randomly as if under the influence of a *confusion* spell for a number of rounds as determined by the wurm's size. This is a mind-influencing compulsion enchantment.

Wurm Size	Rounds of Duration
Small	1d4
Medium-size	2d4
Large	3d4
Huge	5d4

Trample (Ex): A grassland wurm can trample any creature smaller than itself

for an amount of damage as determined by its size. Opponents who do not make attacks of opportunity can attempt a Reflex save to halve the damage.

Wurm Size	Trample Damage	Reflex Save DC
Small	2d6+2	14
Medium-size	2d8+4	18
Large	4d6+8	24
Huge	4d8+12	32

Sprint (Ex): Once an hour, a grassland wurm can take a charge action to move ten times its normal speed (600 feet).

Climate/Terrain: Temperate and warm plains

Alignment: Lawful neutral

Hill Wurm

Hill wurms roam rocky knolls and the rugged hills searching for predators and protecting the prey of the world with their huge claws.

Sometimes called the keepers of the meek, hill wurms are known to hunt only large predators such as leopards and bears, while working to protect smaller animals, like squirrels and sparrows, which live in their territories. The elder wurms in a clutch often hunt in shifts to drive off or kill both diurnal and nocturnal predators that try to invade their hills.

Their most hated enemies, though, are hill giants, who kill indiscriminately and often try to take over the hill wurms' caves. Perhaps for this reason, wurms remain in the clutch for decades before venturing out on their own to mate and find a suitable hill to call home.

Hill wurms have learned much from stalking the predators of the hills, using their strong legs to leap incredible distances to pounce on enemies, much like a leopard. When confronted with multiple opponents, a hill wurm attempts to pounce on the nearest foe and then uses its irritating thorn breath weapon to hamper the other opponents until it can finish its first kill.

Speed: 40 feet

Breath Weapon (Su): Hill wurms can breathe a cone of sharp, briar-like thorns that deal piercing damage to all creatures in the area (Reflex save for half).

Wurm Size	Piercing Damage
Small	3d8
Medium-size	5d8
Large	7d8
Huge	12d8

Hill Leap (Ex): Hill wurms do not have the usual maximums for jumping distance. In addition, three times per day, a hill wurm can add +30 to a single Jump check.

Pounce (Ex): If a hill wurm leaps upon a foe during the first round of combat, it can make a full attack even if it has already taken a move action.

Climate/Terrain: Temperate and warm hills

Alignment: Usually neutral good

Lava Wurm

The arrival of a lava wurm is a portent of doom in many tribal cultures, for they believe that once the wurm is inside, the volcano soon erupts.

Lava wurms thrive off the heat of a volcano and do everything in their power to increase the searing temperature inside the volcano to the point where it erupts. It's not that the lava wurm doesn't understand or doesn't care about the consequences of its actions. Lava wurms simply use volcanic eruptions to remake the landscape and erase the harm they believe has been done by humanoids who live on the fertile ground at the base of these fiery mountains. Although lava wurms despise all humanoids, they have a special hatred for gnomes and dwarves, who try to use the heat of the volcanoes for unnatural work (the creation of humanoid tools and weapons).

Speed: 20 feet, swim 20 feet, burrow 20 feet

Breath Weapon (Su): A lava wurm can spray a line of molten rock that causes both fire and impact damage to all creatures in the area (Reflex save for half).

Wurm Size	Fire Damage	Impact Damage
Small	2d6	1d6
Medium-size	4d6	2d6
Large	6d6	3d6
Huge	10d6	4d6

Fire Subtype (Ex): Fire immunity; double damage from cold except on a successful save.

Lava Walk (Ex): A lava wurm is as sure-footed on slow-flowing lava as in dry conditions and never needs to make a Balance check to move on lava during normal conditions.

Climate/Terrain: Any mountains and underground (volcanoes)

Alignment: Usually neutral evil

Storm Wurm

Storm wurms thrive in the maelstrom of the driving rain, attacking out of the clouds and spewing lightning ahead of them.

The storm wurm is a mischievous creature that lives in the cloud-covered upper reaches of the highest mountains. They generally only leave their lairs during violent thunder storms, preferring to hunt from the cover of the clouds and the rain. Elder storm wurms use their druidic magic to control the weather in the area around their lairs, maintaining a constant storm front over their mountain homes. Storm wurms can also be found living with storm giants on cloud islands—not as pets, but as companions in the clouds.

Unlike true dragons, wurms do not have wings. The storm wurm, though, has developed a thin, strong membrane that stretches between its front and back legs on either side of its long, snake-like body. When the storm wurm stretches its legs out, this membrane becomes taut and catches the wind, allowing the storm wurm to glide and even climb up into the air by undulating its body. Storm wurms are clumsy in the air, and most are envious of more adept flyers, taking great pleasure in defeating them.

Storm wurms are very dange ous in a raging storm, using their scent ability to locate foes in the blinding rain and then glidig down into battle from above, lunching a cone of stunning lightning before attacking.

Speed: 20 feet, fly 40 feet (clumsy)

Breath Weapon (Su): A storm wurm's breath weapon is a cone of stunning lighting. Creatures in the area must succeed at a Reflex save to take half damage. Any creature damaged by the lightning is also stunned for a number of rounds as determined by the wurm's size.

Wurm Size	Electricity Damage	Stun Duration
Small	2d6	1
Medium-size	4d6	1
Large	6d6	1d4
Huge	10d6	1d4

Scent (Ex): A storm wurm can detect opponents (even invisible or hidden foes) within 30 feet by sense of smell. Storm wurms can also use this ability to follow tracks by smell. For a full description of this ability, see the *Monster Manual.*

Climate/Terrain: Any land (storms)

Alignment: Usually chaotic neutral

Cave Wurm

Cave wurms live in the dark places where the faint of heart fear to tread, and they make it their mission to cull the weak from the world.

Cave wurms can be found both in large cavern complexes in hills and mountains as well as in the dark caverns that lie beneath the world. In both environs, these fierce predators prey on the weak, upholding the most basic law of nature—only the strong survive. As such, cave wurms are often at odds with hill wurms, who strive to protect the weak from predators. These two wurms rarely inhabit the same area, because one invariably kills or drives off the other. On the other hand, cave wurms are quite willing to leave other predators alone and come to the aid of dire animals in trouble, for they view these creatures as the ultimate members of their respective species.

In a battle, cave wurms always attack the weakest member of a group, believing the strong have the right to survive. The cave wurm ignores any creature it deems worthy of its race, and the wurm retreats once all weak creatures have been destroyed.

Speed: 40 feet, burrow 40 feet

Breath Weapon (Su): Cave wurms

can breathe a cone of phosphorous spray that coats and outlines an opponent in hot, glowing yellow goop. Creatures in the area are outlined in the phosphorous light, shedding light as candles. They do not benefit from concealment caused by darkness, *blur*, displacement, invisibility or similar effects. In addition, creatures coated by the phosphorus suffer fire damage due to heat each round. Creatures in the area do not receive saving throws to resist or avoid this effect, and it cannot be scraped or washed off. An additional coating of phosphorus does not cause damage while the original coating remains effective. Damage dealt and the duration of the phosphorus light effect are dependent on the wurm's size.

Wurm Size	Fire Damage	Rounds of Duration
Small	1d6	1d4
Medium-size	1d8	1d6
Large	2d6	1d8
Huge	2d8	2d6

Climate/Terrain: Any underground
Alignment: Usually lawful neutral

Mountain Wurm

Unpredictable and easily enraged, the mountain wurm might be th most dangerous of all wurms, especially when its mountain hom is threatened.

Mountain wurms live a nomadic life, moving their clutches up and down the mountain range in search of plentiful food. Thus, mountain wurms do not live in complex cave structures like the cave wurms or build permanent homes like the swamp wurms. Instead, mountain wurms live in small caves that have either been abandoned or in the dwellings left by nomadic mountain tribes.

This chaotic lifestyle has deadened the protective urge toward nature that most other wurms feel toward their homeland. However, mountain wurms often become attached to a single mountain range, fighting to defend it against incursions by lesser races.

In a battle, mountain wurms prefer melee and rarely use their acid breath weapons more than once in a battle (as it advances on its prey). Once in melee, mountain wurms quickly become enraged and fight with a ferocity that is difficult to match.

Speed: 40 feet, climb 20 feet

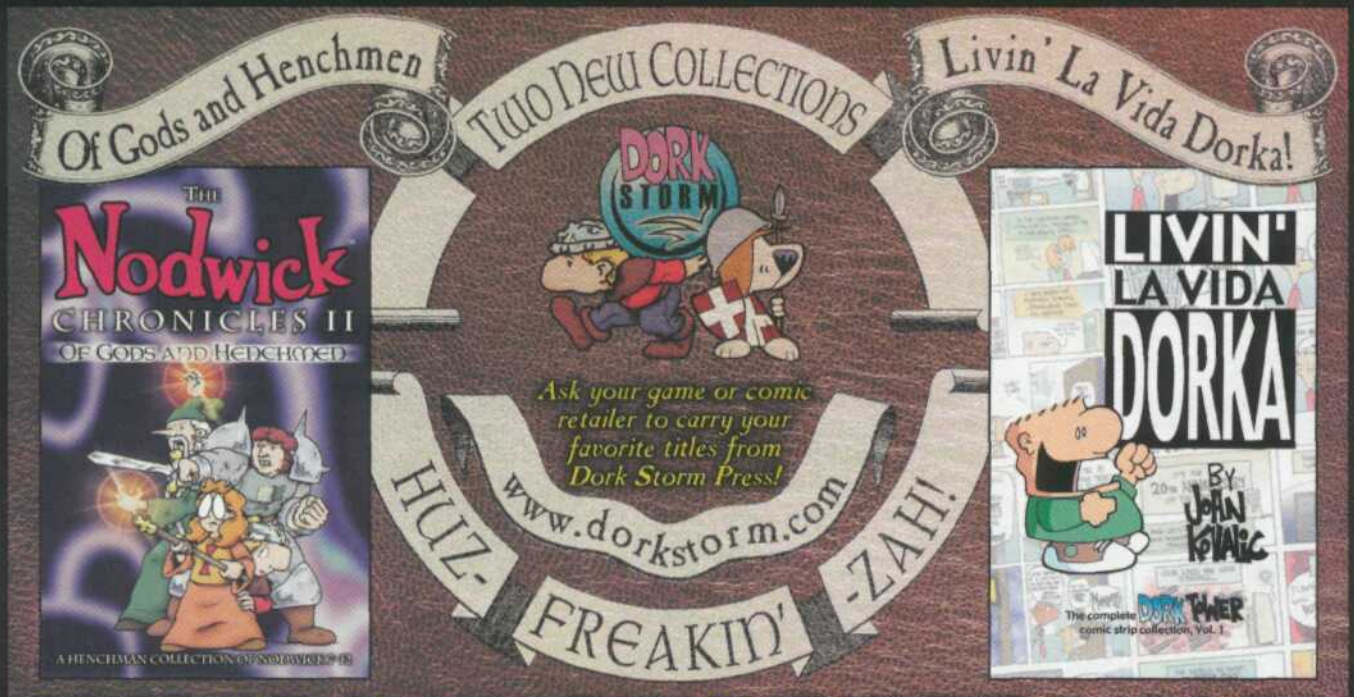
Breath Weapon (Ex): Mountain wurms can spit a line of acidic digestive fluid Creatures in the area suffer acid damage (Reflex save for half).

Wurm Size	Acid Damage
Small	2d6
Medium-size	4d6
Large	6d6
Huge	10d6

Rage (Ex): A mountain wurm can fly into a berserk rage a number of times per day and for a number of rounds as determined by the wurm's size. During a rage, the wurm gains a +4 bonus to Strength, +4 bonus to Constitution, and -2 penalty to AC. At the end of the rage, a wurm is fatigued until the end of the encounter.

Wurm Size	Times Per Day	Rounds of Duration
Small	1	6
Medium-size	2	7
Large	3	9
Huge	4	11

Climate/Terrain: Any mountains
Alignment: Usually chaotic neutral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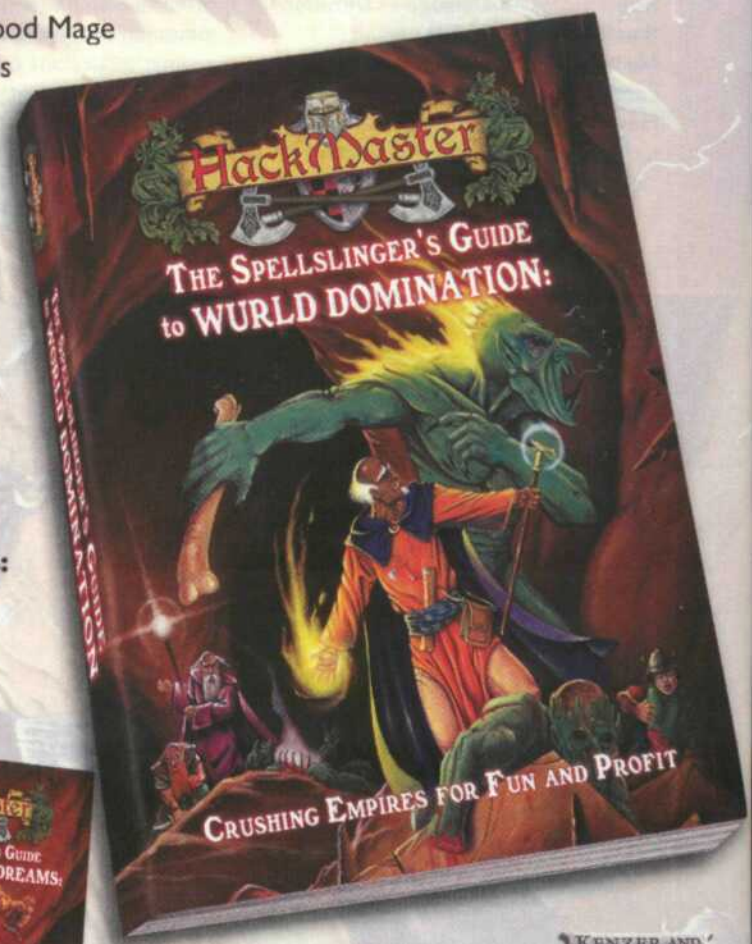

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Living Greyhawk

Journal

Monstrous Gazetteer Index

RPGA NETWORK

no. twelve, Readying 592 CY

Living Greyhawk Gazetteer Index

Let Your Mage Hand Do the Walking

Compiled by Jason Zavoda

When we first published the *Living Greyhawk Gazetteer* a little more than two years ago, one of my greatest regrets was that we didn't have room for a good index. The book was gilded with hundreds of juicy facts about interesting GREYHAWK characters, events, and locales, but even its primary architect (namely, me) admits that it's a textually dense piece of work.

I reference the *Gazetteer* nearly every day, and even I have difficulty remembering where Fred Weining, Gary Holian, Sean K Reynolds, and I name dropped some significant proper noun from the setting's more than 20-year history. If I had problems finding a given fact in the *Gazetteer's* tiny type and tightly spaced lines, I figured Joe Gamer might be having some real trouble. Until recently, it looked as if that's how things would sit forever.

Enter Jason Zavoda. Jason is one of those obsessive GREYHAWK fans who take it upon themselves to index GREYHAWK products, sharing their completed resources with the vibrant online fan community. I used to be one of those guys, and in fact still am, but even I didn't have the guts to embark on such an ambitious project. Jason, on the other hand, was undaunted, Boccob bless him.

So here you have it. A complete index of the setting's most comprehensive sourcebook, right here in the pages of the *Living Greyhawk Journal*. Proper names are listed in alphabetical order by first name. Most entries have been annotated with class, race, and level (in the case of NPCs) or by an identifying abbreviation, found in the box on the next page.

—*ERIK MONA*

Abbreviations

IBC = Inside Back Cover
IFC = Inside Front Cover
[BK] = Book
[BTL] = Battle/War
[BRG] = Bridge
[CAL] = Date/Event/Time
[CAP] = Capital
[CLN] = Clan/Family/Tribe
[CTL] = Castle/Fort/Camp
[GLD] = Guild/League/Union
[ILE] = Islands
[ITM] = Item/Spell
[KNG] = Country/Kingdom/Province
[LNG] = Language
[MON] = Monster
[MT] = Mountain/Hill
[ORG] = Organization/Society
[PHL] = Philosophy/Belief
[PLC] = Place
[PLN] = Plane/Dimension
[PPL] = People/Organization/Position
[PRV] = Province
[QTR] = City Quarter/District/Buildings
[RVR] = River/Lake/Stream
[SCL] = College/School
[STR] = Street/Road/Path
[TMP] = Temple/Church/Shrine
[TRT] = Treaty
[TWN] = City/Town/Village
[WD] = Woods/Forest/Jungle

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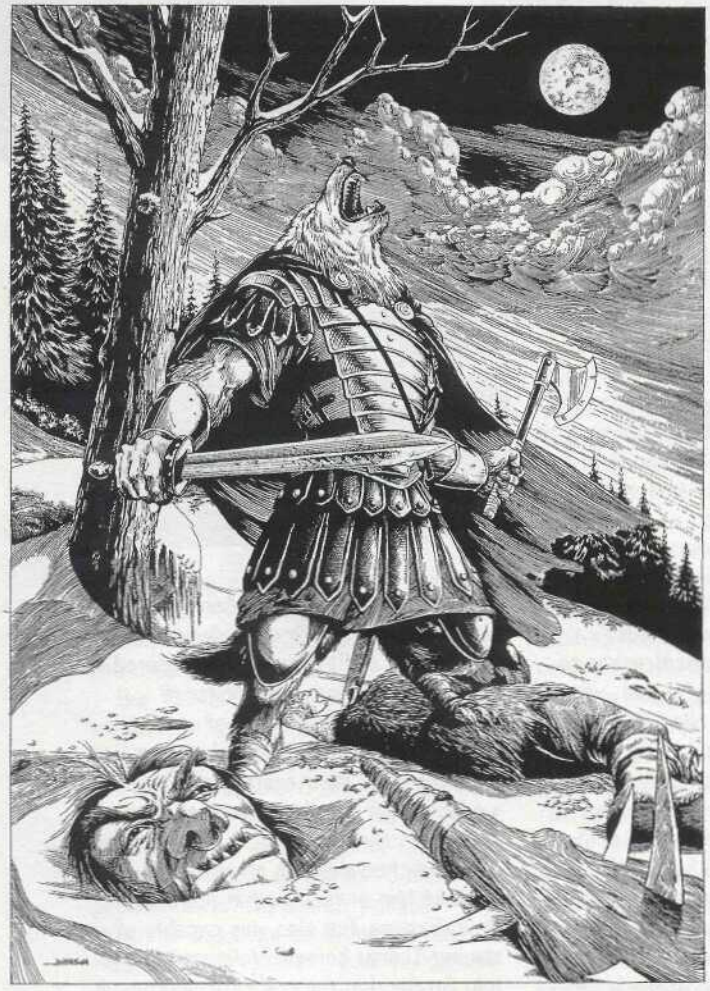

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The Ebon Glaive

by Chris Pramas

The latest DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CHAINMAIL guidebook, *Fire and Ice,* introduces a new battlefield of the Sundered Empire. Known as Scalebane, this battlefield was the site of one of the most ferocious battles of the Demon War. An army of fiendish dragons tore out of the Abyss, wreaking unimaginable havoc until Bahamut the Platinum Dragon sent a legion of metallic dragons to stop them. The dragons clashed in the sky over the Plain of Edora, and hundreds of dragons were slain on both sides. While the metallic dragons were ultimately triumphant over their chromatic foes, the price was high. The elves of Ravilla, mindful of the dragons' sacrifice, treated Scalebane as a site of reverence. However, the area has fallen out of the elves' sphere of influence since their retreat back to their city-states.

Recently, fighting has erupted on the Plain of Edora for the first time in a thousand years. Warbands of every faction descended on the place in search of godly artifacts and extraplanar allies. Although no artifacts have yet been found, those knowledgeable in arcana have been listening for even a whisper of the weapon known as the *Ebon Glaive.* While some say it is foolish to believe that the dying Stratis had a plan when he scattered his panoply, others point to the fact that his spear reanimated the legendary Baklien warlord Ahmut. Since that was surely no coincidence, many wizards and scholars believe that Stratis sent each part of his panoply to a specific destination. These masters of arcana argue that no place in the Sundered Empire is a more likely resting place for the *Ebon Glaive* than Scalebane.

The Right Tool for the Job

At the height of the Demon War, Tiamat sent her chromatic dragons to aid the forces of Yeenoghu and Baphomet. This unholy alliance seemed all but unstoppable, despite the presence of Stratis on the battlefield. The God of War slew many dragons but found that fighting them kept him away from other parts of the battlefield. After one bloody engagement, Stratis decided that he simply needed to kill the dragons faster. Having grown up on the plane of Ysgard, Stratis knew just who to visit.

During a lull in the fighting, Stratis returned to Ysgard, the Plane of Heroes, and descended to the Realm of Nidavellir. This is the land of the Ysgardian dwarves, mighty smiths and mages famed for the power of their magical weapons . . . and their greed.

Stratis visited the city of Ashbringer, also known as the Great Bellows and the Chorus of Ringing Anvils. Located deep underground, Ashbringer is always aglow with the fire of a thousand forges. In the ash-filled air the dwarves hone their craft, producing weapons that are the marvel of Ysgard.

Stratis called on Valin, a mage-smith of unmatched skill. He asked the dwarf to make him a weapon that not only slew dragons, but also was capable of slaying Tiamat herself. Valin smiled and told Stratis that the price for such a weapon would be great.

He explained that for the forging process he needed the blood of all five types of chromatic dragon, and the older the dragon, the better. But he also demanded a cut of hide from each dragon large enough to make a suit of armor.

Stratis agreed to the price, promising to slay five great wyrms in the Demon War and bring their trophies to the dwarf.

But Valin was not finished. He explained that after he had received the blood, he would forge Stratis's weapon, a glaive of unsurpassed keenness, perfect for piercing dragon scales. He would then make five suits of armor from the dragon hides and give them to the greatest dwarf heroes of Nidavellir. When all was completed, Stratis must return to Nidavellir and lead the chosen dwarf heroes in an assault on Svartalfheim, the realm of their dark elf foes. Then, and only then, would Stratis's payment be rendered in full.

Stratis considered the deal and accepted the terms with one condition: He alone would choose the hour of the attack on Svartalfheim, so that he would not be called away from the Demon War during the hour of reckoning.

Valin accepted this condition, and thus the deal was made.

Born in Blood

Stratis was as good as his word. He hunted down five great wyrms—one each of white, green, blue, black, and red—and slew them in furious battle. Valin forged the head of the glaive of purest mithril, working the metal for months and cooling it in chromatic dragon blood. When he was nearly done, Valin quenched the blade again—this time in a barrel of water taken from the River Styx. This final treatment turned the shining mithril blade as black as night, and Valin mounted it on a shaft of finest darkwood. Thus was the *Ebon Glaive* born.

The enchantment of the weapon took another year to complete. Although Stratis bellowed impatiently, Valin would not accelerate his pace. One misstep or bungled phrase, and the enchantment would be ruined. Valin cast spell after spell on the glaive, each one absorbed as greedily as water into parched earth. The final ritual lasted one long week. On the seventh night, the exhausted Valin spoke one last incantation, and the weapon was complete. He slumped to the ground, spellbook clutched in sweaty hands. Although he was more drained than he'd ever imagined he could be, he knew he had just created his life's masterpiece.

Forged in Battle

Stratis immediately took the *Ebon Glaive* to war. His battle cry shook the earth as he charged into melee as Tiamat's minions took to the field. Stratis's godly battle skill and the weapon's dwarf-forged magic were an incredible combination. The God of War brought terror to dragonkind with the *Ebon Glaive*. It cut dragon scales with ease, and the glaive's long shaft allowed it to pierce the heart of all but the largest dragons.

It is the greatest of ironies, therefore, that Stratis missed the battle at the Plain of Edora. In the lull before the attack, Stratis had returned to Nidavellir to lead the promised assault on Svartalfheim. On his return, he was enraged to discover that the battle had been fought without him. Some say that Valin sold the information on the time of Stratis's assault to Tiamat for an enormous amount of gold, but this has never been proven.

The Ebon Glaive (Major Artifact)

The *Ebon Glaive* hasn't been seen since Stratis's final battle. It is precisely because Stratis missed the battle at the Plain of Edora that scholars believe the weapon might be found in Scalebane. What better hiding place for the *Ebon Glaive* than a draconic graveyard?

Physically, the weapon appears as a very finely made glaive, but it is midnight black in color from the base to the tip. A *light* spell cast directly on the blade reveals dwarven runes of power. A successful Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 20 if the runes are not visible, DC 10 if they are) identifies the weapon as the *Ebon Glaive*.

This weapon was not made for mortal hands. As the forged glaive was dipped in water from the River Styx, it causes amnesia to mortals who touch it. Those who touch the glaive must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 17) or suffer total amnesia. Treat the victim as if feebleminded (as the *feeblemind* spell). Even those who make their save lose all memory of the events of the last 8 hours. Prepared spells remain in memory, although the victim might not realize they're prepared. (See the River Styx in Chapter 7 of the *Manual of the Planes* for more on the amnesia condition.) Since the *Ebon Glaive* is sentient and has a special purpose, it uses its influence to make the amnesiac do its bidding. This usually means hunting for dragons.

The *Ebon Glaive* is a *+5 dragonbane keen glaive of speed.* The weapon is neutral, intelligent (Int 20, Wis 16, Cha 18, Ego 39; speech and telepathy), and its special purpose is the slaying of dragons. The wielder of the weapon gains improved evasion as a 13th-level rogue, can *fly* at will as the spell, and can cast the following spells once per day as a 20th-level wizard: *circle of death, globe of invulnerability,* and *teleport without error.* The glaive's special purpose grants its wielder a +2 luck bonus to all saving throws, +2 deflection bonus to AC, and spell resistance 15.

The Adept's Variations

by Rob Heinsoo

The newest DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CHAINMAIL Guidebook, *Fire and Ice* contains new special abilities, scenarios, rules, and terrain for battles in the Dragon's Graveyard setting. It's fitting that the Hobgoblin Adept from Drazen's Horde is shown on the cover of the guidebook, because the Adept is the Set 3 commander most likely to be included in all future warbands from his faction.

In this month's installment of "Command Points," you'll find warbands ready to take the field under the Hobgoblin Adept's command. You'll note that we've skipped detailing terrain choices for each of the warband variations. Most of these warbands work best with terrain that blocks line of sight, unless you're playing in a Mordengard- or Ahmut-heavy environment where the Horde can count on ranged attack superiority.

Ogre Scout 'Em	
Models	Cost
Commanders	
1 Hobgoblin Adept	18
Troops	
1 Ogre Delver	30
3 Goblin Scouts	18
1 Orc Warrior	4
	Total: 70

Ogre Scout 'em

***Bull's Strength* Beatdown:** If you play the Hobgoblin Adept for only one reason, it's to cast *bull's strength* on your toughest model. Casting *bull's strength* on a model with the Extra Melee Attack ability, such as the Ogre Delver, practically justifies the Hobgoblin Adept's 18-point cost. With 3 Goblin Scouts in the warband adding +12 scouting to the Ogre Delver's +4 Scout ability, you're likely to win the Scouting check and be able to cast *bull's strength* on the Ogre Delver before your models even hit the table.

Commander 4 and the Art of War: The Hobgoblin Adept's 4 command points are a magic number. With 4 command points you can give the Ogre Delver a +2 to its melee attacks, a +4 to one of its morale saves, or re-roll initiative and still have the ability to maneuver all three of your Goblin Scouts. Don't let your Hobgoblin Adept languish as nothing but a delivery system for a *bull's strength* booster shot; use your command points to maneuver the Ogre Delver, the Orc Warriors, and the Goblin Scouts to places where they can do the most damage to the enemy.

Small Doesn't Mean Harmless: The Goblin Scouts and the Orc Warrior only have 1 health, but in melee with an Ogre Delver who has Reach 1" that's pumping out 3 damage per hit, your enemy might not be able to spare the time to smash your smaller troops. This could cost them, because the Goblin Scouts' Sneak Attack +1 ability means that your four troops each inflict 2 damage in melee, so long as the Goblins can attack foes already in melee with your other troops.

Flame On

Evisceration Made Bullish: For three points less than the cost of an Ogre Delver, use the Abyssal Eviscerator from the Naresh faction and gain the use of his Extra Melee Attack ability. Then, give the Abyssal Eviscerator a *bull's strength* boost to 3 damage per hit. Since the Eviscerator isn't a Difficult troop, it only requires 2 command points to be rallied or maneuvered as a cross-faction troop. For 4 command points, the Hobgoblin Adept can give it a +2 to hit on its melee attacks. High armor and a better save than the Ogre Delver make the Eviscerator difficult to pass up, but as a Medium-size model, the Eviscerator doesn't have the Reach 1" ability, so you won't get any free opportunity attacks. You'll just have to do things the hard way.

The Heavy Archer: The Demonic Gnoll Archer has a 24" ranged attack that inflicts 2 points of damage. When the enemy closes, the Demonic Gnoll Archer has an even higher melee

Flame On	
Models	Cost
Commanders	
1 Hobgoblin Adept	18
Troops	
1 Abyssal Eviscerator (cross-faction)	27
1 Demonic Gnoll Archer (cross-faction)	18
1 Abyssal Skulker (cross-faction)	7
	Total: 70

attack that also inflicts 2 points of damage. This model might not be a better buy than 3 Goblin Scouts, but it does have something that Goblin Scouts lack: The Resist Fire +4 ability.

Demonic Resistance: Playing with three troops recruited from Naresh's outsiders means that all of your troops have the Resist Fire +4 ability. When the battle gets close, the Hobgoblin Adept can blast his *burning hands* spell into the final melee with no fear of hurting his allies.

Four Models, Just Four: Normally it's a good idea to play with five models instead of four, since a five-model warband gets to activate two models at a time. Warbands based on models with the Extra Melee Attack ability can be the exception to that rule. Against enemies with high health, the Abyssal Eviscerator should be charged rather than do the charging. When charging, the Eviscerator only makes one attack, but when charged while he's standing still, the Eviscerator can attack twice.

With only four models, you'll activate your models one at a time. Against most enemy warbands, you'll get the last action, forcing your opponent to move to Eviscerator if he wants to get an attack against the Eviscerator that round. Save the Eviscerator as the last model to act. If your opponent hangs back, move into melee and hope that you win initiative the next round so that you can get three attacks with the Eviscerator before the opponent gets one!

Controlled Fury

Champions of Solidity: In June, Drazen's Horde gets the Orc Champion, a non-difficult 3rd-level orc fighter with an 8 attack and 6 health. In combination with the Hobgoblin Adept and the Orc Druid, 2 Orc Champions give a Horde Warband unprecedented flexibility.

Blood Harvest, Drazen's Harvest: The Blood Harvest scenario from the *Blood & Darkness* set is all about mobility and interfering with your enemy's mobility. The Orc Druid in this warband's lineup aims to use his *entangle* spell to slow down the enemy. In a Blood Harvest game, you're likely to be able to get your Orc Champions on top of Divine Sparks while your enemy is still trying to pry themselves out of the Druid's *entangle* spell.

Controlled Fury

Models	Cost
Commanders	
1 Hobgoblin Adept	18
1 Orc Druid	12
Troops	
2 Orc Champion	28
2 Goblin Scout	12
	Total: 70

Striking until Death

***Bull's Strength* for Strong Boars:** The Dire Boar inflicts 3 damage when it hits, and that's *before* you cast *bull's strength*. With *bull's strength* aiding it, the Dire Boar has a melee attack of 13 and inflicts 4 points of damage. To add a final injury to its insultingly potent attack, the Dire Boar has the Death Strike ability. Any sensible opponent is going to want to inflict the killing blow against the Dire Boar from a distance, because when the Dire Boar falls to 0 health or below, it immediately gets a final melee attack. Given that the Dire Boar has a speed of 8 and the Wild Troop ability (meaning that it charges unless you spend 2 command points to call it to your Adept), keeping the Dire Boar at a distance usually isn't an option for your enemies.

Kilsek Kill at Range: The drow guest-stars from the Kilsek faction will appear in game stores sometime in June. Normally, it's best to back up charging Wild Troops with other charging Wild Troops, but the Drow Archers have the Precise Shot ability when using their 24″ ranged attack. Unlike Goblin Scouts, the Drow Archers can hang back with your Hobgoblin Adept and fire into the melee the Dire Boar creates without taking penalties for shooting into melee.

Striking Until Death

Models	Cost
Commanders	
1 Hobgoblin Adept	18
Troops	
1 Dire Boar	29
2 Drow Archers (cross faction)	22
	Total: 69
Tactical Advantage	+1

Organized Play: CHAINMAIL

Season 5 of CHAINMAIL's Organized Play League starts on May 25th at gaming stores across the country. This season involves only "aboveground" games with 100-point warbands. Some lucky participants will receive a free Wood Elf Scout model, and the winners at each league location get an alternate-pose Human Death Cleric model, which is not available through normal channels. Yeah, the prizes are cool, but they're not the only reason to join the CHAINMAIL League. You also get to play several games in a dynamic league that allows you to experience many different flavors of opposition. Check out the Wizards website at **www.wizards.com** to learn more about Organized Play and to find a league near you.

Below are some suggestions for modifying the warbands in this article into 100-point warbands for Season 5.

- **Ogre Scout 'Em:** Throw in another Ogre Delver. A Dire Boar would upset the warband's focus.
- **Flame On:** You're not going to go wrong with another Abyssal Eviscerator.
- **Controlled Fury:** Two more Orc Champions, for sure.
- **Striking Until Death:** You don't have enough command points to buy a second (Wild and Difficult x2) Dire Boar and keep the two (cross-faction) Drow Archers, so you might want to buy three Orc Berserkers to charge behind the Boar.

Killer Communication Problems

by Robin D. Laws

DM: Okay, so the remaining members of the group haul the bodies back up to the surface, and you all get 1,500 XP—all of you with live characters, that is—and, oh gee, I forgot something. Let me flip through the book . . . oh, right, Jim, you get negative 6,000 XP, and when you get up to the surface, a big rocket-powered cart thing drives up and sixteen beholders get out and attack you! It's cliffhanger! See everybody next week. Oh, wait. So how did everybody like tonight's session?

YOU: Uh . . .

For a while, we've been looking at ways you can sharpen your roleplaying. Now we're going to switch gears for a bit, with a series of columns aimed at helping you smooth out communication problems with your DM and fellow players.

Most roleplaying groups' biggest problems have nothing to do with rules, adventure design, or the dozen other things roleplayers wrinkle their brows over. The real dilemmas that send good campaigns into a death spiral (or prevent new ones from ever getting off the ground), arise from differing expectations between the players and DM. Some common problems include:

- A DM wants to introduce plot elements to his game, but his players dismissively tell him to skip to the next fight whenever he tries to do so.
- A player finds his rogue character completely upstaged when the DM allows a cleric PC to gain a magic item that gives him better versions of all of the rogue's trademark capabilities.
- Players become frustrated when an NPC hogs the spotlight.
- A player has dragged her new boyfriend into a long-running game. Depending on the couple's mood, they either band together to collude against the other PCs, or they express their real-life annoyance with one another through their characters.

Problems like these have only one solution: communication. The frustrated individuals need to speak up and let the other participants know what's driving them crazy. This is easier said than done. In real life, few of us enjoy a +10 bonus to Diplomacy. Negotiating a touchy subject is hard enough when you're dealing with one person. Getting your point across to a group of people is tough for even a seasoned communicator. Just think back to the last time you had to work on a shared project in school or suffered through a difficult business meeting. Ugh! No wonder we're reluctant to speak up when things start to go astray in our D&D games. The gaming table is supposed to be a place where we have fun and forget the necessary annoyances of the classroom or workplace.

Another reality to keep in mind: Many people are drawn to the game because it gives them a structured way of interacting with other people. Not everyone with a d20 in his hand is a confident negotiator. Some of us know what we want to say but find it difficult to actually step up and let those words out of our mouths. We're worried about hurting each other's feelings or stepping outside of our place. Others can't always find the words to describe their sense of dissatisfaction. On the other side of the fence, we find the guys who can talk the ears off a cornfield but aren't so great at listening or gauging the reactions of others.

A D&D game gives shy folks fictional characters to speak through, and it gives dominating types an arena where it's okay to play a yammering windbag. Especially with younger players, gaming acts as a sort of rehearsal hall for social interaction. If the fun of roleplaying needed some higher justification, this would be it.

When we have a real-world problem to work out, this important strength of roleplaying can turn around to bite us on our well-armored posteriors. Almost all of us are, in one way or another, introverted extroverts, extroverted introverts, or some other killer combination of smart, creative, and cranky. Put five or six of us in a room together, and you can see why many players suffer in silence rather than speak up.

Unfortunately, that's why many campaigns die. For every game that falls apart in a spectacular flame-out, there are a dozen quiet deaths, in which players slowly stop showing up. Nobody's having fun, but no one wants to risk an argument or knows how to negotiate their way out of one. So the group gradually disintegrates. Lucky players might find it easy to hook up with another group. If you're living in an area where it's hard to recruit new gamers, you might end up quitting D&D altogether.

Better then, to take a deep breath, evaluate the problem, figure out the best

way to tackle it, take another deep breath, and then dive in. Over the next few months, we'll be looking at specific tools and strategies for these real-world negotiations, but here's the short and sweet of it:

1. Identify the problem.
2. Identify the causes of the problem.
3. Figure out, and learn to respect, the other person's point of view.
4. Solve the other person's problem another way.
5. Present the problem, with a pos sible solution.
6. Be prepared to compromise.

Step one is the easiest; we know that we're tired of the DM's apparent favoritism toward Biff, or we want the campaign to have a bit more shape to it.

In step two, we ask ourselves whether the problem is with the DM, one of the players, or a result of several peoples' interactions. We try to decide whether the problem arises from a participant's tastes in gaming or from some out-of-game factor, as in the case of the trou-ble-making couple.

Once we've pinpointed the habit that's making us grind our teeth, we try to fig-ure out what lies behind it. In step three, we put ourselves in the other person's shoes. From his point of view, he's doing the right thing. What is he trying to accomplish by doing things in a way we find frustrating?

Having answered this question, we try to find another way, one that achieves both his goals and ours.

Only then, with a possible solution in hand, do we actually bring the matter up. We do so in a friendly, non-con-frontational manner. We want to make things better for the person we're nego-tiating with, not overcome him in a battle of wills.

Finally, we have to be ready to listen and adjust our perceptions, and our proposed solution, as the other party responds and we learn more about his desires and preferences. That's when the negotiation begins.

Join us next time as we focus on step one, identifying some of the most com-mon campaign-killers.

YOU: | Uh, well, since you asked . . .

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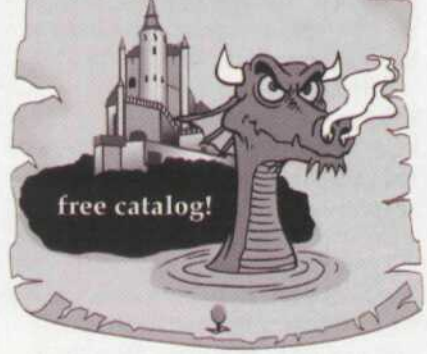

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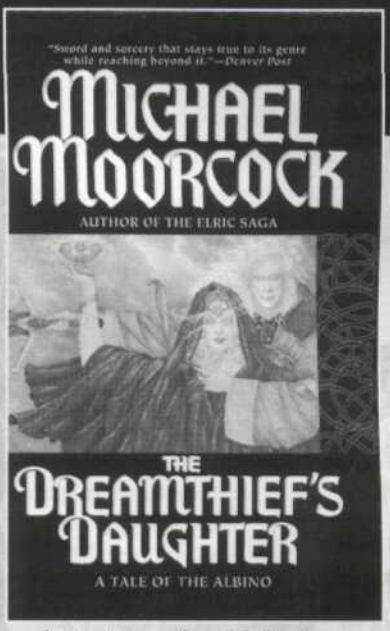
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Killing Campaign Stoppers

by Johnn Four

All is silent around the gaming table as the DM stares at the players. *At least they've stopped arguing with each other,* he thinks to himself. *Maybe they'll do something now.*

The players return their DM's gaze and think to themselves, *Man, this is boring. What are we supposed to do now?*

Stalled games can afflict any group, and when they occur, no one has fun. Usually a game stalls for only a few minutes, but on rare occasions a game can stall for hours or even span several sessions until the whole campaign tailspins into the ground. Thankfully, there is a way to end the stall and jump-start your game again—the stalled game first aid kit.

Your first aid kit has three main items: the diagnosis tool, the treatment tool, and the prevention tool. Study and mastery of each of these tools means more fun, more enthusiasm, and a much lower campaign mortality rate.

The Diagnosis Tool

There are two components to the diagnosis tool. The first is Stall Types, which categorizes the different ways a game session can become stalled. These types are broken down into three main categories: Dungeon Master stalls, player and group stalls, and character and adventure stalls. The second component to the diagnosis tool is Stall Clues, Hints, and Signs, which warns you when your game is slowing down, helping you to curtail a stall before it grinds the game to a halt.

Stall Clues, Hints, and Signs

This part of the diagnosis tool allows you to perceive when a session first begins to stall. Use the You Know the Game is Stalling When . . . checklist to help you spot and recognize the signs when they appear. Consider photocopying the list and clipping it to your screen for quick reference, slipping it into your *Dungeon Master's Guide,* or filing it in your DM's binder (see *Dragon* #290).

If you suspect that your game is stalling, review the different types of stalls discussed in the sidebars to see if any of them match your current circumstances.

The Treatment Tool: Breaking the Stall

You've gone through the checklist and reviewed the stall types, and you are sure that your game is in a stall situation. What can you do to end the stall and get your game going again? Use the treatment tool, of course! This tool offers 10 ways to help you jump-start your game.

1. **Skill and Stat Checks:** This is a great technique because you can employ it in a couple of ways. First, if the party has no clue how to solve their current predicament, you can ask for a related skill check (like Spot or Listen) or an ability check (such as Wisdom) and give out a hint. Second, if the players are unfocused, quibbling, or bored, rolling the dice can instantly bring them back on track and pick up their energy.

2. **Helpful Subplots:** A subplot is a minor story that usually affects one or more PCs and is somehow linked to the main adventure. You can end stalls with subplots by using them to reveal hints, clues, and ideas for tough puzzles; bring the group back into the main story thread; buy you some time while you think of what to do next; experiment with new ideas; or narrow down the PCs' options to help give them direction.

Subplots are especially effective because they don't feel like a "quick-fix." Plus, they add depth to your stories and game world, and they allow for interesting PC experiences that your main story might not permit.

3. **Random Encounters and Wandering Monsters:** This pair of techniques can liven up your game in the same way as the subplots technique, but in a much shorter time span. It is important to

Dungeon Master Stalls

1. **Stuck DM:** The villain has been killed unexpectedly. Where does the DM take the campaign now, and what should the next story be?

2. **Rules Research:** Perhaps due to inexperience with the game system, the implementation of supplemental rules that have not yet been mastered, or simply from dealing with a rare situation that has not occurred in their game before, the DM pauses the game for a significant amount of time while she scours the books.

3. **Improvisation Gone Wrong:** A DM can't plan everything, and sometimes her ideas can lead the party down a path that goes nowhere. Humor with no punch line; a subplot with no easy, interesting, or obvious resolution; and a scenario so cliché that everyone groans are all examples of how an improvisation might go wrong.

4. **DM Steals the Spotlight:** Sometimes a DM gets so caught up in a story that she forgets to involve the players. She might focus too much on background events or roleplay too many NPC-to-NPC scenes.

5. **The Rut:** Experienced DMs can fall into the trap of a repetitive and predictable refereeing style that generates boring adventures, stereotyped NPCs, and yawning players.

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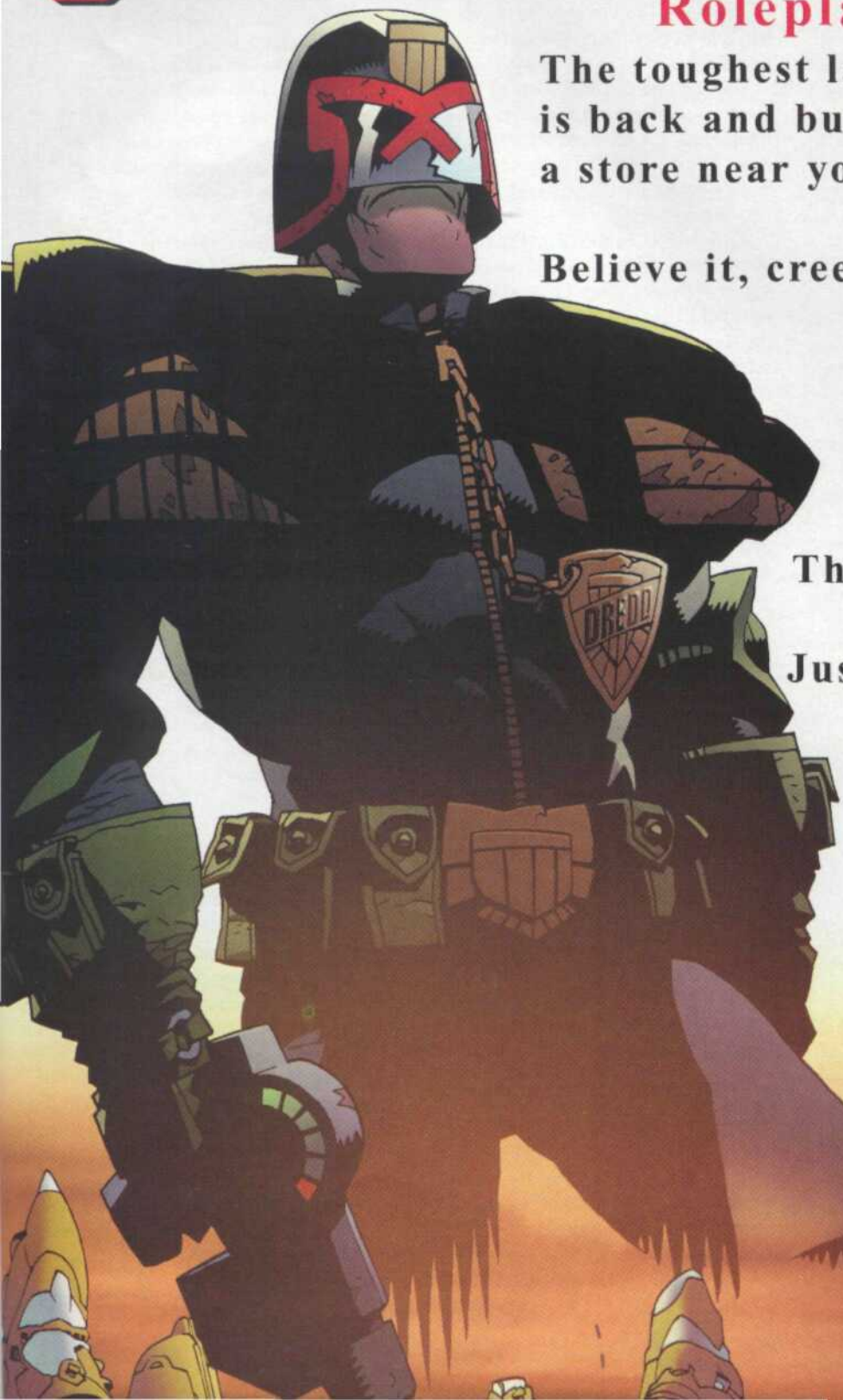

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make these encounters interesting, unless you only want a quick combat to get things rolling again. Before you start the encounter, ask yourself, "What small twist can I add to surprise the players?" and "What can I do to link this to the campaign in a minor way?" Answering these questions makes your stall-breaker much more likely to succeed. With short encounters like these, you can also quickly impart a clue, buy yourself a little planning time, bring a stray PC back to the group, or stop the bickering.

4. Create a New Solution: If the players can't figure out a solution to a puzzle or problem you've created, feel free to create a new solution that is consistent with what has happened in the game so far.

An easy way to do this is to listen to the players as they discuss their situation. Pick one or more of their ideas and put it into place, assuming that the option is still available and makes sense.

5. Helpful NPCs: NPCs are one of the best remedies for a stall, because they can provide player focus, give out hints, enhance your campaign, introduce new plot hooks, and provide excellent roleplaying opportunities. Have one or more NPCs enter the picture and, through their abilities, words, or actions, set the game back into motion.

You Know the Game is Stalling When . . .

- The players yawn and start making dice towers.
- You yawn and start to fidget.
- The group is confused or frustrated, resulting in short tempers.
- Play has been stuck on one encounter for an excessive amount of time.
- The story has not moved forward in the current session.
- A player looks grumpy or sullen.
- A player starts performing chaotic or random acts.
- You haven't had to use your imagination this session.
- You see no way out of the PCs' dilemma either.
- The room is uncomfortably silent.

6. Set a Time Limit: If your players cannot decide on a plan of action because there are too many options or variables, or if the party is divisive, set a time limit and force them to act. For instance, "You must make up your minds in 10 minutes or the ship leaves without you."

You can also use time limits to restrict rules research efforts and irrelevant roleplaying. For example, "Okay, two more minutes, then I'm going to just make a ruling and continue the research between sessions."

7. Re-Introduce the Clue: Did the players completely miss the clue or the sign that they're headed in the wrong direction? Look for ways to re-introduce the clue, perhaps through an NPC or subplot. The repetition, different circumstance, or new wording might jog the players' minds.

8. Talk to the Players: If things just aren't going well, take a break and ask the players for ideas, feedback, or just tactfully make them aware of the stall. If you're stuck on an important ruling, get all the players to help with the research so that you can quickly get the game on track again.

9. Simplify the Situation: Allow the PCs an easy victory to get things moving again, help them realize a bad direction was taken, build their confidence, or reward good teamwork. This also helps you, the DM, move forward with the game so that you have different opportunities and circumstances to work with for generating new ideas, plot threads, NPCs, or encounters.

10. Complicate the Situation: If the players are bored, taking things for granted, or can't make a decision, then throw a wrench or new twist into their plans. A new threat, bigger problem, or greater danger will improve session focus, interest, and energy.

It's important to recognize when a session begins to stall and be able to determine why. The diagnosis tool helps you do this. Following diagnosis, use the treatment tool to quickly remedy the situation. In next month's column, we'll introduce the third item in your kit, the prevention tool.

Player and Adventure Stalls

1. I Should Have Turned Left at Albuquerque: The party makes the wrong decision and takes the game in a completely different direction, deviating from the plotline or current campaign.

2. Too Many Options: There are so many choices and possibilities that the players can't make a decision. There are too many alternatives that are equally appealing or equally appalling, and the group is frozen with indecision.

3. Not Enough Information: There are too few clues, bits of information, or details about a situation for the players to make any decisions.

4. Infighting: The players or the characters do not get along, and the game has become mired in arguments, bickering, and vengeful actions.

5. No Enthusiasm: Players who feel coerced into playing a campaign or particular character become uncooperative. Tired, frustrated, and stressed players can stall games with their lack of energy.

Character and Adventure Stalls

1. Too Hard: The mystery is too difficult to solve, the foe is too powerful, or the odds seem so stacked that the PCs are afraid to take any action.

2. The Puzzle With Just One Solution: A trap, riddle, mystery, or problem has only one answer, and the players have no idea what it is, or perhaps the key lies impossibly out of reach.

3. Mired in Cliché: The game slows because the party must constantly bail their fighter out of jail after a barroom brawl, or the thief gets into trouble after picking a random pocket, and so on.

4. Impatient Adventurer: A player consistently strays off to find her own adventure or discovery that distracts the entire party from the main plot.

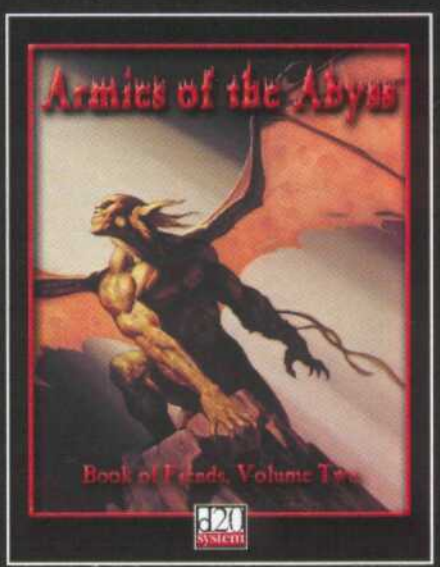
5. Roleplaying Minutiae: Perhaps valuable game time is being squandered as the party re-equips, or it takes an unreasonably long time for the players to divvy up the loot. Or maybe the players stop to interview every minor NPC in depth. When players get caught up in roleplaying minutiae, the story can grind to a halt quickly.

Slay This!

Last year Green Ronin Publishing gave devils their due in the critically acclaimed *Legions of Hell* sourcebook, but the Lower Planes are home to evil every bit as ancient and potent as that of the Pit: the demons of the Abyss. Embodying chaos and evil, demons are frequent and unwelcome visitors to the Material plane. *Armies of the Abyss,* by *Greyhawk Gazetteer* author and *Polyhedron* editor Erik Mona, is your essential guide to the denizens of the infinite layers. Inside its covers you'll find:

- **The Commanders of Chaos:** Complete descriptions of 22 demon princes, including information on their personal realms and spell domains. These lords of the Abyss provide a complete pantheon for the powers of darkness.
- **The Henchmen of Evil:** Over two dozen new demons, including a new race, the Qlippoth. These fiends provide challenges for characters of all levels.
- **The Thaumaturge:** A new core class, a spellcaster who gains power through dedication to a demon prince. However, such power comes at a terrible price...
- **Tools of the Trade:** New clerical domains and spells for the Thaumaturge and other evil spellcasters.
- **Abyssal Images:** Stellar art from 3E concept artist Sam Wood, Tom Baxa, Drew Baker, Chris Keefe, and Toren "MacBin" Atkinson.

Since the earliest days of roleplaying, demons have been the ultimate opposition of fantasy adventurers. Do your players have what it takes to defy the Abyss?



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Silicon Sorcery

Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance

by Will McDermott

Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance is destined to be another classic D&D game, and not just for the playable Drizzt Do'Urden you can unlock (see the sidebar for how to unlock Drizzt). This is a beautiful, easy to play game that uses the power of the PlayStation 2 to bring to life D&D monsters, spells, and classic locales in a way that even a Pentium computer can't. There's no crashing, no jumpy movement, and few if any blocky edges on any of the characters. Kobolds scamper, bugbears lumber, and gelatinous cubes have undigested weapons and armor suspended within their blue bodies. *Magic missiles* chase characters around the screen, and a bull rush ends in a resounding thud that makes the screen as well as your controller shake.

Part of the accepted norms of electronic roleplaying is that at the end of every section of the game, you have to face a boss—some character that is much tougher than anything else you've faced on that level, dungeon, or plane of existence. Now you can face these bosses again in your D&D campaign.

Bugbear Chieftain

The first boss is the only one not to get a name. He's just the Bugbear Chieftain. The big guy's mission is to guard the entrance to the thieves' guild down in the sewers. He accomplishes this with an army of kobolds and a really big morningstar.

Bugbear Chieftain, male bugbear Ftr4: CR 7; Medium-size humanoid (goblinoid); 3d8+3 (bugbear) plus 4d10+8 (fighter); hp 47; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (touch 11, flat-footed 17); Atk +10/+5 melee (1d8+6, *+1 morningstar* wielded two-handed), +7/+2 ranged (1d6+2, javelin), SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Hide +3, Jump +10, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Spot, +3; Alertness, Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (morningstar), Weapon Specialization (morningstar).

Possessions: *+1 morningstar, +1 studded leather armor.*

Karne

The muscle hired to head the thieves' guild, Karne is fast and deadly with his thrown daggers. When you get too close, Karne disappears in a cloud of smoke, reappearing behind you and then hiding in plain sight to get his sneak attack damage with those blasted daggers.

Karne, male human Rog6/Ftr1/Shd4: CR 11; Medium-size humanoid (human); 6d6+6 (rogue) plus 1d10+1 (fighter) plus 4d8+4 (shadowdancer); hp 61; Init +6 (+6 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 21 (touch 16, flat-footed 21); Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+4/crit 19-20, *+1 longsword* wielded two-handed), +16/+11 ranged (1d4+2/crit 19-20, thrown daggers; SQ Evasion, sneak attack +3d6, uncanny

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dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked), hide in plain sight, darkvision, *shadow illusion,* summon shadow, shadow jump 20 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +15, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 22, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Disable Device +14, Disguise +11, Escape Artist +14, Gather Information +9, Hide +20, Intimidate +9, Move Silently +20, Open Lock +14, Perform +9, Pick Pocket +14, Search +10, Tumble +19, Use Magic Device +10; Dodge, Mobility, Combat Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Quickdraw, Weapon Focus (dagger).

Possessions: *+1 longsword, +2 studded leather armor, gloves of Dexterity +4.*

Xantam

You soon learn that there is much more to all this evil than just one thieves' guild: The beholder Xantam is guarding a portal to the Sunset Mountains where an army of monstrous humanoids is gathering.

Xantam, male beholder; CR 13 Large Aberration; 11d8+11 (60 hp). See the *Monster Manual* for the complete statistics.

Ilivarra

When you reach the Sunset Mountains, you find that the dwarven mines have been overrun by Drow and their pet spiders. It takes a while to find the key to the mines, but once inside it's a slugfest all the way down to level three, where you find the seductive Ilivarra who uses *dimension door* like most people use their feet. As she bops around the cavern, she often takes a moment to bring forth a few of her undead friends to keep you busy while she pelts you with spells from her staff.

Ilivarra, female drow elf Wiz7/Pale Master 5: CR 13; Medium-size humanoid (drow elf); 7d4+7 (wizard) plus 5d6+5 (pale master); hp 56; Init +5 (+5 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (touch 17, flat-footed 12); Atk +5 melee (1d6, quarterstaff); SQ Drow abilities, darkvision 180 ft., *animate dead,* summon undead, SR 23; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +8*; Str 10, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 20, Wis 10, Cha 15.

Play Drizzt

Okay, nobody really wants those, but who hasn't been drooling over the chance to play legendary Drizzt Do'Urden in an electronic D&D game? *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance* gives you that chance, but it makes you work for it. You have to do all of the following to completely unlock Drizzt to play in the regular game.

1. Complete *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance* on any difficulty setting and save the game.
2. Start a new game and select "The Gauntlet." This will let you play Drizzt in a special level full of hordes of just about every monster in the game.
3. Run Drizzt through the 9-room gauntlet and kill everything, without saving or dying, within the time limit of 15 minutes. Save your game again.
4. Start another new game and select the new difficulty setting you have now unlocked—extreme. You will start with the characters from your previous saved game, but without any of their gear. It may sound easy to kill giant rats and kobolds when you're 20th level, but all of the monsters are a lot tougher this time through. Finish the game in extreme mode and save.
5. Drizzt is now unlocked and may be brought into any existing game, so start over again and play through with Drizzt.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +15, Concentration +16, Hide +15, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (religion) +15, Listen +2, Move Silently +15, Scry +20, Search +7, Spellcraft +20, Spot +2; Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Evocation), Combat Casting, Spell Mastery (*magic missile, melf's acid arrow, fireball, lightning bolt*), Skill Focus (Knowledge [religion]), Spell Penetration, Craft Staff.

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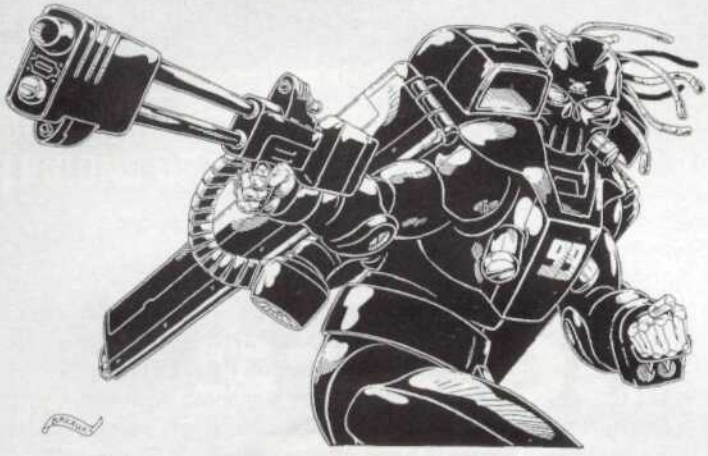

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SQ—*Animate Dead* (Sp): Once per day as a spell-like ability, Ilivarra can use *animate dead* without need of a material component.

SQ—Summon Undead (Su): Twice per day, Ilivarra can summon three ghouls, shadows, ghasts, or wights, or two wraiths. This is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The undead appear at the beginning of the pale master's next turn. They have +4 turn resistance and remain for 10 rounds.

Wizard Spells (4/6/5/4/4/3): 0—*detect magic* x2, *mage hand, ray of frost;* 1st—*mage armor, shield, chill touch, ray of enfeeblement, feather fall, spider climb;* 2nd—*invisibility, bull's strength, endurance, resist elements, darkness;* 3rd—*lightning bolt, haste* x2, *fly;* 4th—*dimension door* x2, *ice storm, improved invisibility;* 5th—*cone of cold* x2, *teleport.*

Possessions: *Ilivarra's staff, ring of protection +2, gloves of dexterity +4.*

Ilivarra's Staff: This mahagony staff with a crystal ball set in the top can be used to cast the following spells:

- *Fireball* (1 charge)
- *Magic missile* (1 charge)
- *Melf's acid arrow* (1 charge)

Caster Level: 10th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Staff, *magic missile, Melf's acid arrow, fireball;* **Market Price:** 37,500 gp; **Cost to Create:** 18,750 gp + 1,500 XP; **Weight:** 4 lb.

Ciraxis

The drow mage holds the key to the lair of a white dragon who guards a portal to more minions of evil in the Marsh of Chelimber. After several levels of giants, winter wolves, and displacer beasts, facing the dragon might be a relief—sort of. As with Xantam, you can get everything you need to fight Ciraxis from the *Monster Manual.*

Ciraxis, mature adult white dragon: CR 11; Huge Dragon; 21d12+105 (241 hp). See the *Monster Manual* for the complete statistics.

Sess'sth

In the marsh, you find that the Lizardfolk have been acting strange since an ominous tower appeared. The tribes have banded together under one leader who now follows the orders of some being in the tower. If you destroy Sess'sth, you are told, the tribes will disband. Sess'sth is a ferocious fighter who fights to defend his homeland.

Sess'sth, male lizardfolk Bbn13/Tribal Protector 2: CR 16; Medium-size humanoid (aquatic, reptilian); 2d8+8 (lizardfolk) plus 13d12+52 (barbarian) plus 2d10+8 (tribal protector); hp 171; Init +4 (+4 Improved Initiative); Spd 80 ft.; AC 22 (19 without buckler, touch 14, flat-footed 22); Atk +24/+19/+14/+9 melee (1d10+11, *+2 bane vs. humans great club*); SA Wild fighting; SQ Rage 4/day, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked, +2 against traps), fast movement, damage reduction 1/—, tribal enemy (humans), homeland; AL CN; SV Fort +15, Ref +10, Will +4; Str 22, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +4, Intimidate +9, Jump +22, Swim +24; Blind-Fight, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack.

SA—Wild Fighting (Ex): Similar to a monk attacking with a flurry of blows, Sess'sth can enter a state of wild fighting, attacking in a storm of ferocious assaults. Sess'sth gains one extra attack per round at his highest attack bonus, but all of his attacks in that round suffer a -2 penalty.

SQ—Tribal Enemy (Ex): Sess'sth gains a +3 bonus to Bluff and Sense Motive checks, as well as weapon damage rolls against the humans of Baldur's Gate. The bonus to damage does not apply to ranged weapon attacks if Sess'sth is more than 30 feet distant.

SQ—Homeland (Ex): Sess'sth gains a +2 bonus to Hide, Intuit Direction, Move Silently, and Wilderness Lore checks in his homeland.

Possessions: *+2 bane vs. humans great club, +2 acid resistance buckler, ring of protection +4, belt of giant strength +4, bracers of health +4, boots of striding and springing.*

Eldrith

Once you defeat Sess'sth, you can make your way to the tower. At the top, Eldrith, a fallen paladin who once was the sworn protector of Baldur's Gate, awaits you. Eldrith has returned from the grave to wreak vengeance on those she feels betrayed her.

Eldrith, female human Palg/Blk10: CR 19; Medium-size humanoid (human); 9d10+18 (paladin) plus 10d10+20 (blackguard); hp 143; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 25 (touch 11, flat-footed 24); Atk +30/+25/+20/+15 melee (1d10+10/crit 17-20, *+5 throwing, returning bastard sword* wielded one-handed); SA Smite good 2/day, sneak attack +4d6; SQ *Detect good,* poison use, dark blessing, aura of despair, command undead, lay on hands, fiendish summoning, undead companion; AL LE; SV Fort +17, Ref +11, Will +12; Str 20, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +17, Diplomacy +19, Heal +17, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (religion) +22, Ride +16; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Critical (bastard sword), Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-by Attack, Trample, Weapon Focus (bastard sword).

Possessions: *+5 throwing, returning bastard sword; +4 full plate; +2 buckler; eyes of lightning;* 4 *potions of enlarge.*

Eyes of Lightning: These two blue, crystal lenses fit over the user's eyes. Using them, the wearer can cast *lightning bolt* as a 10th-level sorcerer (DC 14 Reflex save for half damage) at will.

Caster Level: 10th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *lightning bolt;* **Market Price:** 60,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 30,000 gp + 2,400 XP; **Weight:** —

Blackguard Spells (3/3/2/1): 1st—*change self, obscuring mist, spider climb;* 2nd—*darkness* x2, *undetectable alignment;* 3rd—*deeper darkness, invisibility;* 4th—*dimension door.*

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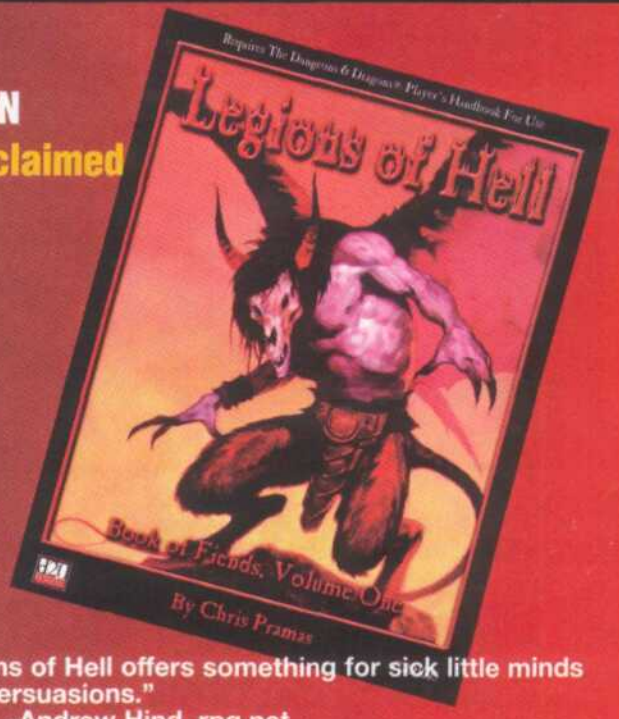

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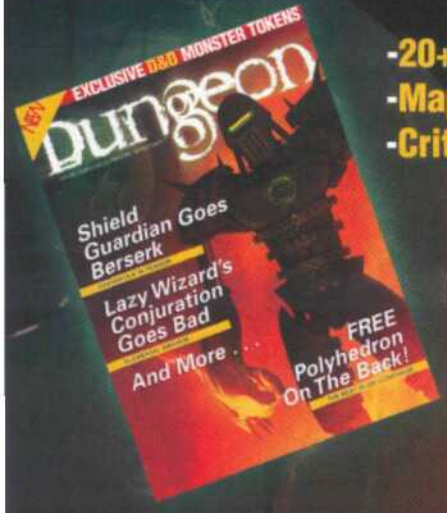
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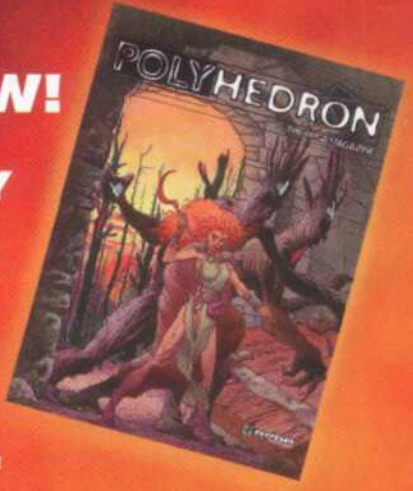

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This month, the Sage ponders queries about the recently released *Song and Silence* book and considers questions about spells and magic in the D&D game.

The Pyro feat from *Song and Silence* seems to say that the feat gives you a +1 per die of damage you inflict with any spell that has the fire descriptor. At least that's what my players think. Is this true? Can a *fireball* cast by a 6th-level character with the Pyro feat deal 6d6+6 points of damage? Will *Aganazar's scorcher* also deal the extra point per die? There are so many; the list could go on and on. Some other spells my players are asking about are: *burning hands, fire shield, wall of fire,* and *flame arrow.*

The Pyro feat lets you deal extra damage when you set something on fire (such as when you use alchemist's fire). See Catching On Fire in Chapter 3 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Most fire spells don't set anything on fire, and even fewer set creatures on fire.

As noted in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, no spell with an instantaneous duration will set a creature on fire, so the Pyro feat won't grant you any extra damage from *Aganazar's scorcher, burning hands,* or *fireball.*

The flames from the warm version of the *fire shield* spell do not set creatures or objects on fire.

You can set objects alight with a flaming projectile with a *flame arrow* spell, but not creatures. If you set fire to an object with a flaming projectile, the object suffers 1d6 points of fire damage per round, starting the round after it was hit, or 1d6+1 points of damage per round if you have the Pyro feat. The fiery bolts from a *flame arrow* spell do not set creatures or objects on fire.

Can you take the Dash feat (from *Song and Silence*) more than once and stack the speed increase?

You can't take a feat more than once unless the feat specifically says you can (Dash doesn't say you can).

The Hamstring feat from *Song and Silence* allows you to use a sneak attack to reduce a creature's speed. Can you hamstring a creature more than once and quarter its movement? How about using it to strike a wing instead of a leg to halve its flying speed?

Multiple hamstring effects don't stack, except where specifically noted otherwise; for example, you have to hamstring a quadruped twice to reduce its speed by half. Note that once you reduce a quadruped's speed, additional hamstring effects don't stack.

You can't hamstring a wing to reduce flying speed. The Hamstring feat only works against a creature's land speed, as noted in the feat description.

Why are creatures with more than four legs immune to the Hamstring feat? Why couldn't you hamstring a six-legged creature three times and reduce its speed by half? Also, the feat description says the movement reduction lasts 24 hours or until a successful Heal check. What's the DC for the Heal check?

While I suppose you could hamstring just about anything by successfully hitting half its legs, the process gets absurd after awhile. For example, you'd be much better off just making four regular sneak attacks against a monstrous spider than you would be to hamstring it four times. In addition, most things that have more than four legs don't really have "hamstrings." In any case, creatures must be vulnerable to sneak attacks to be susceptible to hamstring attacks. For example, you cannot hamstring a golem or other construct because you can't sneak attack a construct.

It takes a Heal check (DC 15) to remove the speed loss from a hamstring attack.

I found the description for the Quicker Than the Eye feat confusing. Do you get an actual extra partial action granted to you if any foe (even 1 out of 20 goblins) fails the Spot check? Or is this feat meant to just allow you to make one attack after bluffing in the same round?

Quicker Than the Eye doesn't give you any extra actions. Creatures that fail their spot checks just don't see what you're doing for the rest of the round.

Once you make your Bluff check (as a move-equivalent action) you can do just about anything with the remainder of your round. Because you have already made a move-equivalent action, you have only a partial action left. You could use that partial action to attack, move, use a skill, cast a spell, or any one of a number of other things, see Partial

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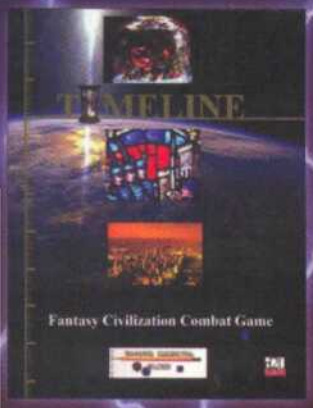

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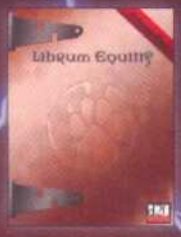

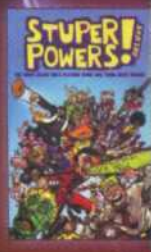

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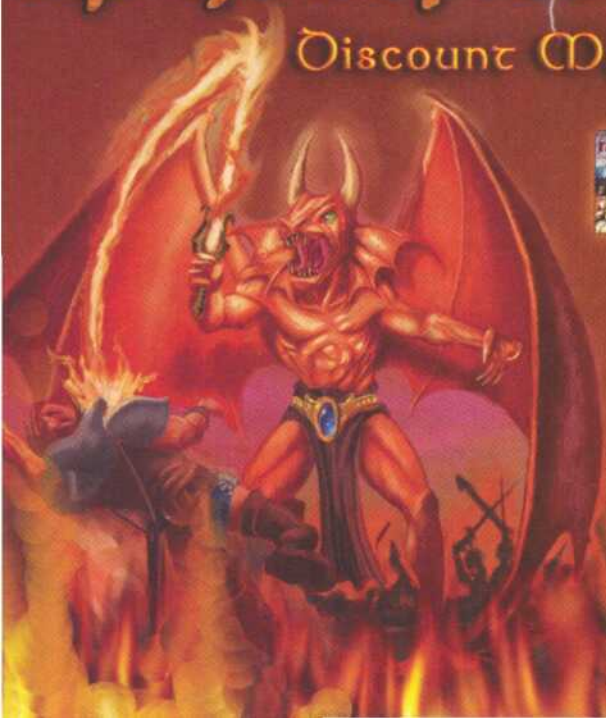

Actions in Chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Note that what you can do after the Bluff check does not depend at all on the outcome of your opponents' Spot checks, but any opponent who makes a successful Spot check observes what you do with your partial action.

Suppose I'm a rogue with the Expert Tactician feat from *Sword and Fist* and the Quicker Than the Eye feat from *Song and Silence*. If I'm in melee with an opponent and use a move-equivalent action to Bluff my foe and get him to look away, can I do the extra attack from the Expert Tactician feat? If I do that, can I then use my remaining partial action to run away? What happens if I use my partial action to bluff again? Can I then make a second free attack?

An opponent who fails to spot your bluff when you use Quicker Than the Eye does not see the partial action you take after the bluff, so your opponent is denied his Dexterity bonus against your melee attacks. If you also have the Expert Tactician feat, you can make an immediate free attack against a foe who failed his Spot check against your bluff. Once you do so, that opponent is observing you again, and that opponent will observe you if you try to run away after the free attack. Because the attack you make by virtue of your Expert Tactician feat is a free action, you could attempt to use Quicker Than the Eye again, but your opponent should get a bonus to the Spot check. The second Bluff check also is a move-equivalent action, so you would be done acting for the round. If the second Bluff check succeeded, however, your opponent would once again not see you, and you could make another free attack by virtue of your Expert Tactician feat.

The virtuoso prestige class from *Song and Silence* has an ability called sustaining song. The description for this ability mentions something called a stabilization check. What is a stabilization check? Also, sustaining song lasts for 5 minutes, or until the virtuoso stops performing. What does that mean?

The phrase "stabilization check" refers to the 10% chance a dying character has to become stable each round (see Dying in Chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*). While a sustaining song is in effect, a dying character does not check to become stable each round and does not automatically lose any hit points for not becoming stable.

A sustaining song lasts for a maximum of 5 minutes, or until the virtuoso stops the sustaining song effect, whichever comes first.

The virtuoso prestige class also has an ability called calumny, which is a supernatural, mind-affecting, language-dependent ability. What is a language-dependent ability?

A language-dependent effect uses intelligible language as a medium. If the subject cannot understand what the ability user says, the effect fails. "Language dependent" is a standard descriptor for spells and other magical effects. It is described under Descriptors in Chapter 10 of the *Player's Handbook*.

When a virtuoso at 1st level gets the bardic music ability, does she also get one additional use of this ability per level like the bard? If the virtuoso also has bard levels, can the character use her daily virtuoso allotment of bardic music for bard music abilities? Can she use her daily bard allotment of bardic music for bard levels, and can she use her daily virtuoso allotment of bardic music for virtuoso music abilities?

Yes to all. Uses of bardic music from the virtuoso and bard classes are completely interchangeable. Add up the daily uses of bardic music for each class. The character can expend these on any bardic music ability her bard or virtuoso classes make available to her.

A *wall of force* is transparent. Does that mean you can cast spells on the other side of it? I know if the spell actually travels from the caster to the target that it will be blocked, but what about situations where you designate the originating point, such as *flame strike?* Common sense suggests that it would be possible to cast such spells, but I know I am going to need more than common sense to resolve this issue.

Perhaps you are confusing the rule for line of effect with the rule for line of sight. If your spell has a target entry, you must have line of sight to your target or be able to touch your target (see Aiming a Spell in Chapter 10 of the *Player's Handbook*). If your spell has an effect or area, you need not see the place where you aim the spell, but you have to designate the place where you're aiming somehow (also see Aiming a Spell in Chapter 10 of the *Player's Handbook*). So, if your line of sight is blocked by something that does not also block line of effect (such as darkness),

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by Stephen Schubert

Low saving throws can be the bane of any party, but minor magics can raise a saving throw by as much as +5! The key is using as many different bonuses that might apply to saving throws. Resistance, competence, morale, and luck all stack, and enhancement bonuses to ability scores increase saves as well. The cantrip *resistance* gives a +1 (resistance), as does the orison *guidance* (competence). *Bless* provides a +1 morale bonus to fear saves, and *prayer* confers a +1 luck bonus to all saves. *Cat's grace, endurance,* or a *potion of wisdom* (or *owl's wisdom* from *Tome and Blood*) give a 1d4+1 enhancement bonus to the ability scores, which translates into at least an additional +1, but maybe even +2 or +3 to the appropriate saving throw. Antitoxin (page 113 in the *Player's Handbook*) provides an invaluable +5 alchemical bonus on certain Fortitude saves. At higher levels, items can be found that help to supplant these bonuses: A *cloak of resistance* is well worth acquiring, or perhaps even a *luckstone.*

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you can still cast an area or effect spell through the blockage.

A *wall of force* blocks line of effect, just like any other solid barrier. As noted above, you need line of effect between you and the point of origin for your spell (or to your spell's target, or to the space in which you create an effect with a spell), see Line of Effect in Chapter 10 of the *Player's Handbook*.

If the line of effect from the example *flame strike* spell passes through a *wall of force*, the spell is blocked. The blocked spell fails and is wasted. The spellcaster knows the spell failed but does not necessarily know why. A successful Spellcraft check (DC 15) reveals that line of effect was somehow blocked.

Does *antimagic field* actually prevent the casting of a spell from within the field? That is, does the spell automatically fail, and is it wasted?

No. An *antimagic field* suppresses magic used within, brought into, or cast into its area, but is does not dispel it (see the second paragraph of the spell description).

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Does an *antimagic field* suppress a spell effect at the point of origin or the area of effect? For instance, if I cast *silence* on myself and then cast *antimagic field* (assuming I have the Silent Spell feat) would the entire *silence* spell be suppressed (because it's centered on me), or just the 10-foot radius surrounding me, leaving a 5-foot ring of silence around the outside of the antimagic field?

It depends on the spell. *Silence* is an emanation, so the whole effect is suppressed if the point from which the effect emanates is inside the field. With an area spell, only the part of the area that is within the field is suppressed. Note that the field blocks line of effect, so an area cannot extend through the field. For example, if you brought the field into a *fog cloud* effect, only the portion of the *fog cloud* that lies within the *antimagic field* would be suppressed. On the other hand, if you cast *antimagic field* in a corridor 10 feet wide, the *fog cloud* effect could not spread past the *antimagic field*. Note that a spread effect will flow around an *antimagic field* if it has space to do so, just as it would spread around any other barrier.

Does *antimagic field* suppress effects such as doors sealed with *arcane lock*, magic traps, magic secret doors, and so on? The *arcane lock* spell specifically states that only destroying the door, *knock*, or *dispel magic* can get through a door sealed with *arcane lock*.

Antimagic field is an emanation. As such, it does not extend through or into solid barriers, such as closed doors. In your example, the field stops at the door with the *arcane lock*. Because the field touches the door, the *arcane lock* effect on the door is suppressed (if a creature or object touches the field it is "in," the field and any magic operating on it is suppressed). Note that if the door in question was not a solid barrier, the field could extend through it. For example, if the door had an opening in it 1 foot square (see Line of Effect in Chapter 10 of the *Player's Handbook*), the door would not block the *antimagic field*. Any magical effect operating on the door would be suppressed by the field, and the field would reach beyond the door according to the normal rules for line of effect. Likewise, if the door was not a physical barrier at all, but a magical effect itself (perhaps a figment such as *minor image*), the field would suppress the magic and the "door" would disappear.

Most magical traps are also rendered inert by an *antimagic field*.

What happens when a *prismatic wall*, *prismatic sphere*, or *wall of force* is cast so that it intersects an *antimagic field*? Does the intersection count as the space being occupied, as noted in the descriptions for these spells?

Yes. These are cases in which the pre-existing spell has squatter's rights over the space. An *antimagic field* blocks line of effect for any spell area or spell effect that extends into it. If you try to cast any wall effects into or through a space containing an *antimagic field*, the effect is disrupted just as it would be if cast into a space containing an object or creature.

All three of the effects you mention, however, are impervious to *antimagic field*. If one of these effects is already in place, the *antimagic field* stops where it meets them, just as it stops where it meets a solid barrier.

The *Monster Manual* says that undead ignore mind-influencing effects and even lists the following types: charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects. The only two of the above mentioned that are illusions are phantasms and patterns. There is no mention of the other three types of illusions; figments, glamers, and shadows. Under the descriptions of these three it says they fool the senses, not the mind directly. However, the *invisibility to undead* spell is from the Abjuration school, not the Illusion school. This implies that undead ignore all illusions in general and that it takes other magics to fool them. So, do undead "see" the life forces of their victims (as implied in the spell *deathwatch*)? Or is it some other sort of arcane vision? If the first applies, does *deathwatch* allow you to see through

illusions? If undead are affected by illusions such as the arcane version of *invisibility*, are they also affected by normal and magical darkness?

Undead have no immunity to figments and glamers or to illusions in general; if they did, that information would be included in the undead type description.

It's a fairly common error to assume that the existence of a specialty spell such as *invisibility to undead* means that undead aren't affected by other forms of invisibility. But it's an error nevertheless. *Invisibility to undead* is an abjuration not because undead have any special immunity to *invisibility* or other glamers, but because the game's designers looked at the rules for specialist wizards and concluded that more Necromancy specialists would have access to Abjuration spells than to Illusion spells. Note that if a type of creature is immune to a particular kind of effect, any similar effect that actually works on that kind of creature will be named so as to minimize confusion. For example, the *halt undead* spell could be called *hold undead* (and it was called *hold undead* in older versions of the game). However, hold effects are compulsions, and undead are immune to those, so *hold undead* was renamed *halt undead*.

The undead type description says undead have darkvision. It's true that the *Monster Manual* doesn't say anything about the general visual capabilities of undead creatures, but you also won't find anything like that about the other types of creatures, either. The fact is, undead have normal vision as well as darkvision. Do not assume a creature lacks one of the four basic senses (sight, hearing, smell, and touch) unless its description or the description of its type says so specifically. For example, oozes are blind. Note that taste is not a default sense, but you can assume that any living creature has a sense of taste and that unliving creatures do not.

Do not assume a creature has a special sense unless its description or its type description says so specifically. For example, undead have darkvision, and oozes have blindsight. If undead creatures had the ability to see life, the undead type description would say so.

Do not assume a creature has a special immunity unless its description or its type description says so specifically.

In any case, undead, thanks to their darkvision, remain unaffected by normal darkness. Magical *darkness* defeats darkvision, so undead cannot see through it.

Finally, while the opening lines of the *deathwatch* spell description make mention of the power of undeath, that is a reference to the school of Necromancy, not the undead creature type. As it happens, *deathwatch* can reveal illusions, at least indirectly. If a creature is actually a figment, *deathwatch* reveals that it is neither alive nor dead. Note that creatures created with shadow spells fool the *deathwatch* spell. A shadow orc, for example shows up as a living creature, and a shadow zombie shows up as undead.

As a DM, I have ruled that spells with the range of "touch" are the only spells that allow you to use the holding the charge rule from Chapter 10 of the *Player's Handbook*. My players argued that any spell that uses a ranged touch attack, such as *disintegrate*, also qualified. Which is correct?

Look at the spell's range entry. If it doesn't say "touch," you can't hold the charge. *Disintegrate* is a medium range spell (100 ft + 10 ft. per caster level), not a touch range spell. Because *disintegrate* is a ray, you do indeed make a ranged touch attack when using the spell, but that's not the same as a range of touch.

Is an armor-clad character who is able to use arcane scrolls subject to the spell failure chance from armor when using an arcane scroll? What about other magic items?

Arcane spell failure doesn't apply when you're activating a magic item, not even a scroll.

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PHIL FOGLIO'S WHAT'S NEW WITH PHIL & DIXIE

SO, THE THEME OF THIS ISSUE IS DRAGONS. WE DO THAT EVERY YEAR! WHAT IS IT WITH YOU PEOPLE IN EDITORIAL?
ASSIGNMENT #33
WE...WE JUST LIKE DRAGONS, OKAY? YOU... YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.
DRAGON
DRAGON
DRAGON
OOOH HELP!
TEE HEE
EDITO
GREAT. HEY-WHAT ARE YOU LOT STILL DOING HERE? YOU'RE FROM A JOKE TWO MONTHS AGO.
WE SIGNED A SIX MONTH CONTRACT.
OH... RIGHT.
SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING WITH DRAGONS AGAIN.
...THAT'S IT?
WELL... NO, IT'S DIXIE AND ME.
OH?
SINCE SHE BECAME EVIL WE NEVER TALK ANYMORE.
RANTING DOESN'T COUNT.
REALLY? BUT I HEARD HER TELLING YOU ABOUT HER PLAN TO HAVE DICE DECLARED ILLEGAL.
AH- I KNOW WHAT YOU NEED.
ZOP
AN ALIGNMENT SWITCH!
BWAHAHA! YES! NOW I SEE THE SOLUTION! OF COURSE!
YOU ALWAYS CARRY AN ALIGNMENT SWITCHER?
YOU WOULD NOT BELIEVE HOW USEFUL IT IS WHEN DEALING WITH HMOs.
BUT DO YOU THINK THAT WAS A SMART THING TO DO?
OH RELAX.
AFTER HE'S MADE UP WITH DIXIE I'LL JUST SWITCH HIM BACK.
REMEMBER— WHEN TRYING TO ESTABLISH AN EVIL REPUTATION- NOTHING BEATS FEEDING ONE'S OWN FRIENDS TO THE DRAGONS! Heh Heh Heh Heh!

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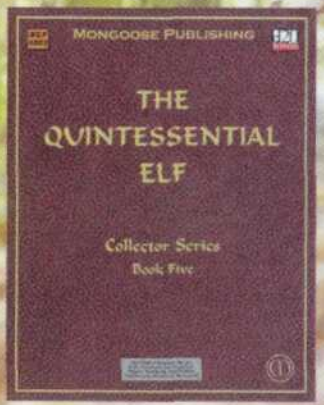

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